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OPINION METER

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DAYS

INSIDE



RP Blasts

Explosions rocked two Philippine shopping centers and two women were seen on video planting the bombs.

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The Catholic school drama "Doubt" led contenders for the Screen Actors Guild Awards with five nominations.

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MHS students donate money to Ballesteros family. **PAGE 5**

FRUIT BAT POACHING INVESTIGATION

Federal agents search Rota homes

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, along with other federal agencies including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, searched five Rota homes yesterday as part of an investigation into the recent poaching of an estimated 190 protected Mariana fruit bats.

The recent poaching decimated two of the island's three remaining colonies, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Mariana fruit bat is protected as a threatened species under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. Killing a protected species, or destroying its habitat, is a federal criminal offense. In addition, the hunting of Mari-

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Watergate's 'Deep Throat,' Mark Felt, dies at 95



AP

Former FBI officials, Mark Felt, left, and Edward S. Miller, appear at a news conference, in this April 15, 1981 file photo after learning that President Reagan had pardoned them from their conviction of unauthorized break-ins during the Nixon administration's search for opponents during the Vietnam War.

By LOUISE CHU
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—W. Mark Felt, the former FBI second-in-command who revealed himself as "Deep Throat" 30 years after he tipped off reporters to the Watergate scandal that toppled a president, has died. He was 95.

Felt died Thursday of congestive heart failure in Santa Rosa after several months of failing health, said family friend John D. O'Connor, who wrote the 2005 Vanity Fair article uncovering Felt's secret.

The shadowy central figure in the one of the most gripping

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U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE

The endangered Mariana fruit bats.

Korean group opens new center in San Antonio

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

The Korean Association of Saipan inaugurated yesterday a new Korean Community Cen-

ter in San Antonio where they plan to put up a language school to teach their children how to speak their native tongue and to know their parents' culture.

One of the association's board members noted that some of their children who are born and raised on Saipan could not speak their native language fluently.

"So this would be a big help for them—from the kindergarten up to high

school. They are really our target but people who may not be Koreans may also enroll," Jun Lee said.

Saipan Mayor Juan Tudela, Department of Public Safety Commissioner Santiago Tudela and Korean Consul General Lee Chong-il were the special guests during the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Tudela said the association had previously requested for a site in Garapan where they

See **KOREAN** on Page 4



NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

Mayor Juan B. Tudela, Korean Consul General Lee Chong-il and DPS Commissioner Santiago Tudela lead the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Korean Community Center in San Antonio yesterday afternoon.

Local

NMC preparing for WASC's decision

The Northern Marianas College is continuing its effort to be removed from show-cause status, as it prepares for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges' Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges to make a deci-

sion in January.

Earlier this year, WASC ordered NMC to provide reasons—or "show cause"—why the college's accreditation should not be terminated. The show cause order set a timeline for NMC to submit reports to the accrediting

agency. The college submitted a report to the agency in October; in November three WASC members visited the campus.

NMC has decided to submit a supplemental report to WASC before Dec. 31. The report will add more information on how NMC has been meeting the accreditation requirements.

The school also is in the final stages of completing NMC's Institutional Excellence Guide, said NMC president Carmen Fernandez. The guide is a comprehensive document that details the school's shared governance structure, planning and budgeting process, and program review and assessment.

Everyone at the school is involved in NMC's accreditation efforts, Fernandez said.

"We have been continuing the work we had set in motion when the College was placed on show case status," she said. "Faculty, staff, students, and board members have been hard at work doing their part in meeting ac-

creditation requirements. We're already in the midst of the next program review cycle. We have secured financial commitments from the legislature and other funding agencies, and we are stepping up professional development training for staff."

WASC will make their decision in January. *(Kristi Eaton)*

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USCG cutter returns from 'Operation Santa's Sleigh'

GUAM—The Coast Guard cutter *Assateague* returned to Guam after completing a rewarding mission to bring Santa

Claus and presents to distant Micronesian islands. In conjunction with Operation Christmas Drop, the cutter carried gifts

and supplies provided by the Guam Navy Officers Spouses Connection, Anderson Airforce Base, and Coast Guard personnel from Guam.

To conduct Operation Santa's Sleigh, Cutter *Assateague* headed 390 miles south of Guam last week to Woleai Atoll in the Yap State of the Federated States of Micronesia. While the cutter waited



offshore on Dec. 17, Santa (aka Commanding Officer Lt. Jim Jarnac) landed by small boat to off load 500-plus lbs of presents that included toys, books, and clothing, one-hour presentation at the island's

high school for 50-plus 11th and 12th graders. He shared his life experiences in the Coast Guard so the children could see the world through his eyes. Jarnac also gave a presentation on how the Coast Guard conducts their search and rescue mission.

The crew of the Cutter *Assateague* was treated to a very festive departing fiesta with cultural dances from three different groups (men, women, children). Christmas carols were sung by

all at the end of the fiesta. According to Jarnac, "This was the experience of a lifetime for my entire crew and we are truly grateful to the warm hospitality given by the people of Woleai Atoll!"

Cutter *Assateague* is a 110 foot island-class patrol boat based in Apra Harbor, Guam. The cutter supports many Coast Guard missions, including search and rescue, port security, and maritime law enforcement. (USCG)

WIC opens new Navy Hill clinic

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

The Women, Infants and Children program officially opened its new clinic on Navy Hill during a ribbon cutting ceremony yesterday.

The WIC clinic was previously based at the Commonwealth Health Center while some administration services were based on Navy Hill.

The WIC program is a federally funded supplemental nutrition program for women, infants and children up to 5 years old.

With the new clinic, services could be centralized in one location, according to Public Health Secretary Joseph Kevin Villagomez.

"It centralized everything to be more efficient," he said. "In the past some clients were down temporarily in the old building and had to rush up here."

The new clinic also focuses on energy efficiency, which will save money, Villagomez added. There is a bid out for a wind turbine that will provide alternative energy to the clinic. The clinic's backup generator will not only provide the clinic power if there is an outage but excess power will be sold back to the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.

Although the clinic was renovated from an existing building, it looks almost new, Villagomez said.

There have been challenges for the CNMI WIC chapter, which opened in August 2007, but the clinic signifies progress, Villagomez said.

"There's been a lot of growing pains, but we're turning a corner," he said, adding that

WIC services are now offered on Tinian and will be offered on Rota starting in January.

Gov. Benigno Fitial, during his remarks, said the CNMI WIC program has infused substantial federal funds into the local economy and created at least 19 new jobs. DPH, through the WIC program, has secured more than \$6 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture since WIC started. Nearly \$400,000 of that funding from fiscal year 2008 was used to fund the new clinic.

For fiscal year 2009, the CNMI WIC chapter will receive \$4 million in funding with \$2.8 million of that going directly into the local economy through the form of food vouchers, Fitial said.

"These funds will support retail grocery stores that participate in the WIC programs—directly supporting local businesses that pay taxes and create jobs. By late next year, our local farm economy will also be supported with the introduction of WIC's new food package for fresh local fruits and vegetables," he said.

WIC program director Josephine Tudela also gave brief remarks during the ceremony.

In August, officials from the U.S. Department of Agriculture toured the clinic while it was under construction.

"I think it's great they're moving out here on their own," said Nancy Montanez Johnner, Undersecretary for the USDA's Food, Nutrition and Consumer Sciences program, while touring the building.

In October, WIC implemented a new computer based program to expedite record keeping.

Fitial welcomes ex-justice's economic summit proposal

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial welcomes retired justice Jose S. Dela Cruz's call to convene a CNMI economic summit, according to press secretary Charles Reyes Jr. yesterday.

Reyes said Fitial respects Dela Cruz's opinion and that the idea to hold an economic summit is "perfectly acceptable."

"If he [Dela Cruz] wants to sponsor a summit with the members of the Legislature that's perfectly fine," Reyes told *Saipan Tribune*.

The spokesman said the governor supports people's desire to engage in community discussions.

"We support freedom of speech. We support discussion on the economy. He [Fitial] is not against somebody who wants to

call a summit," Reyes said.

In a recent letter to the editor, Dela Cruz said government and business leaders should rise to the occasion and take charge of the economic predicament that the CNMI is now in by calling for a major economic conference.

"The purpose of such working economic conference is to address and try to correct the CNMI economic downturn that we have been in for several years now," the retired justice said.

Senate President Pete P. Reyes and House Speaker Arnold Palacios, who expressed support for the idea, are reportedly planning to meet with Dela Cruz to find a way to set up a working group that will formulate some research and finalize a methodology in order to push through with the conference.

Kalabera Cave assessment nearly complete—Arriola

The environmental assessment of planned enhancements to the Kalabera Cave is 30 percent complete, according to Ed Arriola Jr., chairman of the Marianas Visitors Authority's Destination Enhancement Committee.

The committee is planning to install an elevated walk-

way and lighting in a bid to establish the site as a tourist attraction. The Kalabera Cave closed this summer in order for Cabrera & Associates to conduct an assessment on the impact of the changes.

The walls of Kalabera Cave are adorned with ancient

artwork likely painted by Saipan's indigenous Chamorro people, giving the site a special significance to local cultural groups. During the Battle of Saipan, the cave also served as a field hospital for Japanese soldiers.

Kalabera's slippery rocks and

the darkness in some of its deeper reaches have prevented many tourists from visiting it.

The report will be submitted to the U.S. Department of the Interior, and if they approve, the DOI will provide the \$1.5 million to fund the project, Arriola said. (Kristi Eaton)

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NWA, Delta to continue to invest in region

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Northwest Airlines Corp. and Delta Air Lines Inc. will continue to invest in the region following its \$17.7-billion mega merger earlier in the year.

This according to Northwest Airlines Guam and Saipan general manager Richard A. Parsons in a recent email to the *Saipan Tribune*.

“Our merger with Delta has allowed us to develop growth opportunities as we connect the networks to create new revenue streams neither airline could have achieved independently. We will continue to follow the ‘Flight Plan to invest in and further diversify our international network in the CNMI as well as other regions including Pacific, Africa, India, and the Middle East to help

mitigate the risk from specific regional economies,” he said.

Parsons said passengers will soon notice the effects of the merger in the months to come, which will both appear in the carriers’ branding and operations.

“You will initially begin to see Delta’s name and brand displayed with Northwest’s, and we will begin to coordinate our flight schedules and policies for maximum customer convenience. Full integration of Northwest into Delta will take time and will be completed through a thoughtful integration process over the next 12-24 months,” he said.

Squeezed by record high fuel prices and a slowing economy, Delta Air Lines and Northwest Airlines last April agreed to a stock-swap merger that would create the world’s biggest carrier.

Under the terms of the Delta transaction, Northwest shareholders will receive 1.25 Delta shares for each Northwest share they own. The exchange ratio represents a premium to Northwest shareholders of 16.8 percent based on Monday’s closing stock prices.

Based in Minneapolis, Minnesota,

Northwest Airlines is one of the world’s largest airlines with hubs at Detroit, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Memphis, Tokyo and Amsterdam, and approximately 1,400 daily departures. Northwest is a member of SkyTeam, an airline alliance that offers customers one of the world’s most extensive global networks. North-

ter of their own.

“Now, through the efforts of the community, we are able to realize this dream. Though there is much work to be done and many renovations to be made, I think that the new Community Center will be completed next year,” Consul Lee said.

Lee thanked the association and the Korean School of Saipan who have devoted much time and energy to make the new center a reality.

west and its travel partners serve more than 900 cities in excess of 160 countries on six continents.

Delta Air Lines, for its part, operates an expansive domestic and international network, spanning North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Caribbean. It flies to over 332 destinations in 57 countries (excluding codeshare), across five continents. Delta Air Lines is also the only major U.S. carrier that flies to Africa.

Park Jun-Soo, president of the Korean Association, said this is a much-anticipated project and its groundbreaking ceremony is a momentous occasion.

The center will have two administrative offices, an auditorium, three storage units, a basketball court, and 64 parking lots.

The school area will have 13 classrooms, an office, a library, cafeteria, kitchen, three storage units and four toilets.

WATERGATE’S

From Page 1

political dramas of the 20th century, Felt insisted his alter ego be kept secret when he leaked damaging information about President Richard Nixon and his aides to *The Washington Post*.

While some—including Nixon and his aides—speculated that Felt was the source who connected the White House to the June 1972 break-in at the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee, he steadfastly denied the accusations until finally coming forward in May 2005.

“I’m the guy they used to call Deep Throat,” Felt told O’Connor for the *Vanity Fair* article, creating a whirlwind of media attention.

The man who had kept his secret for decades, now weakened by a stroke, wasn’t doing much talking—he merely waved the media from the front door of his daughter’s Santa Rosa home.

Critics, including those who went to prison for the Watergate scandal, called him a traitor for betraying the commander in chief. Supporters hailed him as a hero for blowing the whistle on a corrupt administration trying to cover up attempts to sabotage opponents.

Felt grappled with his place in history, arguing with his children over whether to reveal his identity or to take his secret to the grave, O’Connor said. He agonized about what revealing his identity would do to his reputation.

Would he be seen as a turncoat or a man of honor?

Ultimately, his daughter Joan persuaded him to go public; after all, *Washington Post* reporter Bob Woodward was sure to profit by revealing the secret after Felt died. “We could make at least enough money to pay some bills, like the debt I’ve run up for the kids’ education,” she told her father, according to the *Vanity Fair* article. “Let’s do it for the family.”

The revelation capped a Washington whodunnit that spanned more than three decades and seven presidents. It was the final mystery of Watergate, the subject of the best-selling book and hit movie *All the President’s Men*, which inspired a generation of college students to pursue journalism.

It was by chance that Felt came to play a pivotal role in the drama.

Back in 1970, Woodward struck up a conversation with Felt while both men were waiting in a White House hallway. Felt apparently took a liking to the young Woodward, then a Navy courier, and Woodward kept the relationship going, treating Felt as a mentor as he tried to figure out the ways of Washington.

Later, while Woodward and partner Carl Bernstein relied on various unnamed sources in reporting on Watergate, the man their editor dubbed “Deep Throat” helped to keep them on track and confirm vital information. The *Post* won a Pulitzer Prize for its Watergate coverage.

Within days of the burglary at Water-

gate that launched the *Post*’s investigative series, Woodward phoned Felt.

“He reminded me how he disliked phone calls at the office but said that the Watergate burglary case was going to ‘heat up’ for reasons he could not explain,” Woodward wrote after Felt was named. “He then hung up abruptly.”

Felt helped Woodward link former CIA man Howard Hunt to the break-in. He said the reporter could accurately write that Hunt, whose name was found in the address book of one of the burglars, was a suspect. But Felt told him off the record, insisting that their relationship and Felt’s identity remain secret.

Worried that phones were being tapped, Felt arranged clandestine meetings worthy of a spy novel. Woodward would move a flower pot with a red flag on his balcony if he needed to meet Felt. The G-man would scrawl a time to meet on page 20 of Woodward’s copy of *The New York Times* and they would rendezvous in a suburban Virginia parking garage in the dead of night.

In the movie, the enduring image of Deep Throat—a name borrowed from a 1972 porn movie—is of a testy, chain-smoking Hal Holbrook telling Woodward, played by Robert Redford, to “follow the money.”

In a memoir published in April 2006, Felt said he saw himself as a “Lone Ranger” who could help derail a White House cover-up.

Felt wrote that he was upset by the slow pace of the FBI investigation into

mother were also found.

DFW officers noted that prior to their arrival at the site they noticed five hunters leaving the colony site.

Biologists estimate that about 190 fruit bats or as much as 14 percent of the Rota bat population was destroyed, with 1,000 or fewer fruit bats left on the island. In 2000, there was an estimated 2,500 fruit bats on the island.

“Hunting at fruit bat colonies is particularly harmful because the colonies are primarily composed of females, infants and juveniles, with a few breeding males,” DFW states. “A Mariana fruit bat produces only one offspring at a time, which may stay with the mother for at least a year. This causes the population to grow very slowly and makes every female and offspring crucial to the recovery and long-term survival of the species.”

Other agencies involved in the in-

vestigation include the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency; National Marine Fisheries Service; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; U.S. Coast Guard; U.S. Marshals, and the U.S. Naval Criminal Investigative Service. Leonardo M. Rapadas, United States Attorney, also provided assistance.

The Mariana fruit bat is a medium sized bat found only in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. Fewer than 100 of the bats remain on Guam and fewer than 5,000 in all of the CNMI. The bats live in colonies, primarily in native forests, of a few individuals to more than 800. They group themselves into harems (one male with 2-15 females) or bachelor group consisting primarily of males. The colonies sleep during much of the day, with bats gradually departing for several hours after

sunset to forage. They mostly eat the fruits and flowers of native plants and are important components of tropical forest ecosystems. They disperse plant seeds and thereby help maintain forest diversity and contribute to plant regeneration following typhoons and other catastrophic events.

Strong fliers that traverse long distance, the Mariana fruit bat can easily fly between islands ranging from 18-62 miles apart. The species is a member of the family Pteropodidae, which is often referred to as flying foxes because of the canine appearance of the face. The bats range in weight from 0.66-1.15 pounds (males are slightly larger than females) and have an impressive wingspan ranging from 2.75-3.5 feet. All Mariana fruit bat have grizzled black to brown fur and a golden brown mantle. The head color varies from brown to dark brown.

FEDERAL

From Page 1

ana fruit bats has been outlawed by the CNMI since the 1990s.

“We are urging anyone with information about the poaching of these rare animals to please come forward,” said Paul Chang, special agent in charge of law enforcement for the Fish and Wildlife Service’s Pacific Region. “The future of an entire species may depend on it.”

Known as “fanihi” in Chamorro, the Mariana fruit bat was once common throughout the Northern Marianas and was an important food to the Chamorro people. In the past few decades, the bats numbers have been plummeted, mostly due to habitat loss and hunting. Recent poaching on Rota has pushed the species closer to extinction.

CUC schedules 3-hour power outage today

Parts of Saipan will experience a three-hour power outage today, Dec. 20, as line crews of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. clear away hazards from power lines at the American Memorial Park and Smiling

Cove Mariana.

In a statement issued yesterday, CUC said the power interruption will affect the entire Feeder 2 power grid and portions of Lower Base, CPA (Seaport), Hotel Street, Beach Road

Garapan south to the San Jose intersection.

The outage, lasting from 7am to 10am, will allow CUC crews to safely clear all potential hazards such as trees and other vegetation away from the high volt-

age power lines at the park and the marina.

Over the last week, the Feeder 2 circuit has experienced two power interruptions as a result of electrical faults caused by trees making contact with primary lines and failed distribution power pole hardware.

"To address this problem, CUC is scheduling the power outage [today] to perform the necessary line clearing and system inspections. However, prior

to line clearing all vegetation must also be cleared from the highway shoulder so the bucket truck will be able to enter and reach the trees to be trimmed," said the CUC statement.

As a protocol, CUC will trim only those trees that pose a hazard to primary or secondary power lines. The crews consider the tree's health as they maintain the necessary power line clearance of at least 15 feet. All limbs overhanging over lines will be

trimmed as high as possible. All efforts will be made to eliminate weak, diseased and dead limbs above the wires that may fall or blow into wires.

"CUC apologizes for any inconvenience this power interruption will impose on the community and will continue to perform all the necessary system maintenance to minimize future power interruptions," said the utility agency. (*Saipan Tribune*)

DESPITE PSS' OPPOSITION

House OKs bill to create autism commission

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The House unanimously passed yesterday a bill that proposes to develop a state plan of services for people with autism.

"There are 58 students diagnosed with autism. I say that's only the tip of the iceberg," said House Bill 16-135 author Rep. Heinz Hofschneider shortly before voting was made.

Hofschneider gave the statement in response to comments submitted by Board of Education Committee on Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs chair Lucia L. Blanco-Maratita and Education Commissioner Rita A. Sablan, who both opposed the legislation.

"This is a CNMI concern. This is not a territorial dispute," the lawmaker said. "Don't oppose progress. Don't oppose care."

In casting his vote, Rep. Ralph DLG. Torres, who chairs the House Committee on Health, Education, and Welfare, said he commends the parents who sup-

ported the bill.

With 16-0 affirmative votes, the legislation now goes to the Senate for similar passage.

The legislation will establish the Commonwealth Commission on Autism to study and investigate issues, including the early identification and intervention of autism spectrum disorders.

Hofschneider stated in the bill that autism is the fastest growing serious developmental disability in the United States and the Commonwealth.

He said experts estimate that two to six children out of every 1,000 will have autism.

The lawmaker noted that the economic impact of autism in the U.S. is more than \$90 billion annually and is expected to more than double in the next decade.

In their opposition to the legislation, Blanco-Maratita and Sablan pointed out that, although the intent to create a commission is commendable, the Public School System cannot support the bill in its cur-

rent form.

Blanco-Maratita and Sablan said the bill seems to circumvent certain local and federal regulations of both education and governmental entities.

"For example, section 106 of the bill proposes that the Commonwealth Autism Commission would not have to follow the Administrative Procedures Act," the two education officials said.

Blanco-Maratita and Sablan said the Board of Education Standing Committee on Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs is unsure why CAC would be able to exist outside channels of government that provide for checks and balances.

They said the Committee cautions that CAC would still have to go through proper channels when requesting information from PSS about its students.

The two education officials said the CAC does not and cannot dictate to PSS.

"Conflicts could arise because PSS already has policies and procedures in place regarding special needs children," they said.

Blanco-Maratita and Sablan also noted that the Committee's concern is that many departments within PSS are already burdened with a heavy workload and are short-staffed.

4pm to 10:30pm are also on the menu.

"We're inviting community organizations to tie up with us in their fundraising activities," Cullat said.

Hard Rock is also planning to hold its first ever New Year's Countdown on Saipan where customers will enjoy a local band and a masquerade show. The Countdown will be from 10pm to 2am.

"We want to inform the community that we are not that expensive, as many believe. The locals will have more chance to avail of our quality service," Cullat said.

Another project in the planning stages is a bartending competition sometime in January.

"Our place can accommodate 350 to 400 people. It's ideal for stage plays and mini-concerts," Cullat noted.

He said customers could also visit the Hard Rock store and buy products at discounted prices and avail of free gift items like t-shirts and caps. If you buy any three adult t-shirts or polo shirts, you will get a free cap.

Another promo is the 10 percent discount on one's second visit to the restaurant and a free cap.

Hard Rock lines up promos, events to draw local guests

By **NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.**
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REPORTER

Despite the economic crisis, Hard Rock Café Saipan is still doing fine, according to assistant general manager Aldwin Cullat.

He said they are aware of the declining number of visitors to the island but tourists, especially from Japan and Korea, continue to drop by the restaurant and enjoy its affordable meals and quality service.

However, in anticipation of what's going to happen in the next few months, Hard Rock has lined up several activities to also encourage the local community to come and avail of the many promotional activities that would not only benefit the restaurant but community groups and institutions, too.

One of these is the recently launched "Smells Like Teen Spirit Rock Aid Fundraiser."

Students can get a flyer at the restaurant and stamp their school's name on it and present the flyer when they eat at Hard Rock. Cullat said that 10 percent of all purchases would be donated to the school. The promotional period is until Dec. 31, 2009.

Happy hour discounts from

MHS students donate money to Ballesteros family



By **KRISTI EATON**
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The junior class at Marianas High School yesterday gave \$110 to the widow of slain security guard Efren L. Ballesteros.

Junior class president Klynne Serrano and junior class treasurer Arisha Nishimura presented Adelaida Abella with the money as well as toys for Ballesteros' and Abella's two sons.

Abella said she would use the money to help pay for her sons' expenses.

For the last two weeks, stu-

dents were asked to donate whatever they could during homeroom, Nishimura said, adding that the idea only came up recently.

"But we thought it was better late than never," Serrano added.

Karen Borja, principal of MHS, said she was proud of the students' generosity.

"As far as students and fundraising, I feel it's always important to give back to the community. It's important to share the generosity," she said.

Ballesteros, 45, was found dead at the MHS campus in

Susupe where he was assigned in the morning of Nov. 18, 2008. He received massive injuries to the face and head caused by blunt objects. He also suffered a possible fractured skull, police said.

Three teenagers—Edward Blas, Randy Igisomar, and Eric Rabauliman—have pleaded not guilty in the case.

The Saipan Pacific Winds, the CNMI's sole community concert band, will be holding a fundraising concert for the family of Ballesteros on Dec. 22 at the Pacific Islands Club in San Antonio.

MHS junior class treasurer Arisha Nishimura and junior class president Klynne Serrano donate \$110 to Adelaida Abella. Joining them are MHS secretary Tita Gabredo, left, and MHS principal Karen Borja, right.
KRISTI EATON

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

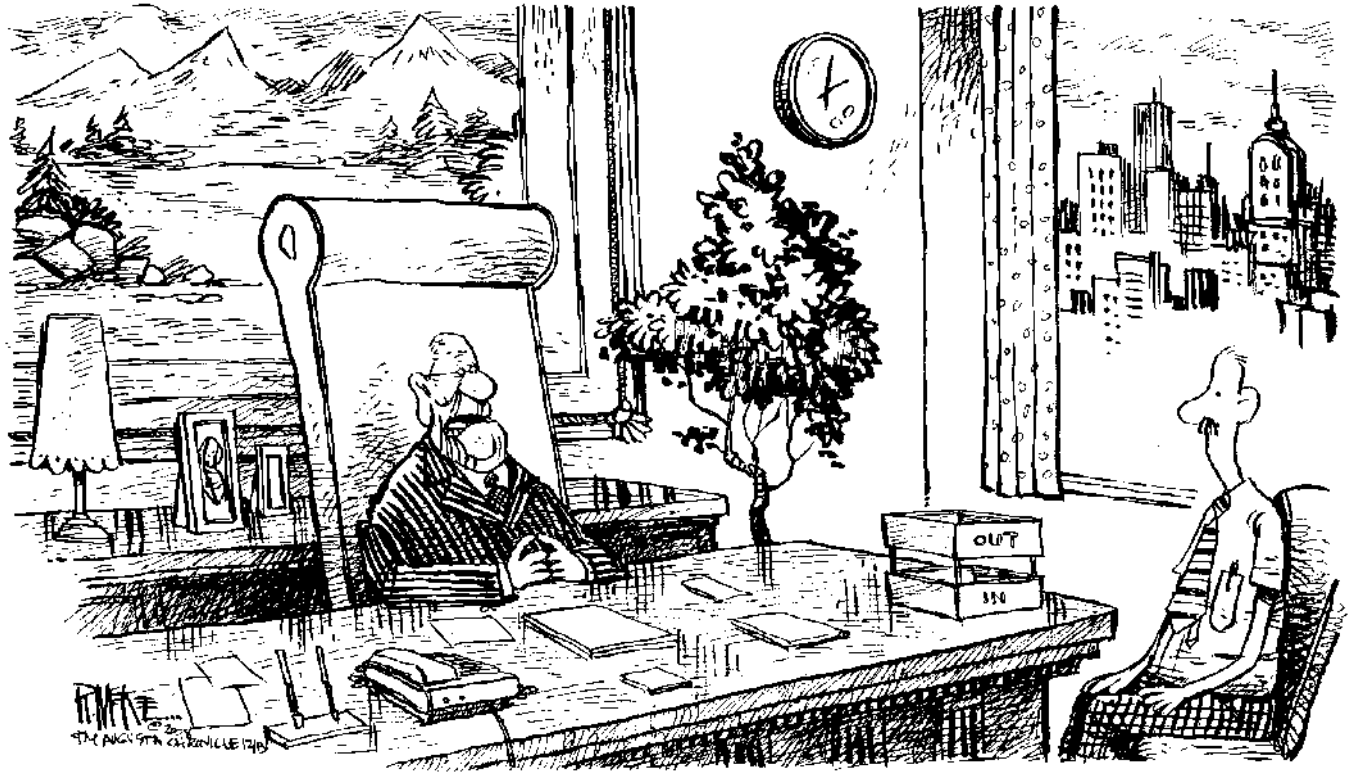
Swindle of the century

To describe Bernard L. Madoff's alleged securities fraud as a Ponzi scheme is a bit unfair to Charles Ponzi, the legendary swindler of the post-World War I era. Their methods were roughly the same: like Ponzi and his "postal reply coupons," Mr. Madoff reported phantom returns from supposed stock market plays, paying his investors off with cash invested by new pigeons. But, while Ponzi cheated people out of millions of dollars, the price tag of Mr. Madoff's con game is a reported \$50 billion. Even that spectacular estimate shouldn't be trusted, because it comes from Mr. Madoff himself. Still, there is no question that Mr. Madoff has done epic damage to investors large and small, all over the world. The victims range from leading Spanish, British and Japanese banks, to Hollywood's Steven Spielberg, to lots of far less exalted players—most pathetically the charities that believed the claim on Mr. Madoff's corporate Web site: "Bernard Madoff has a personal interest in maintaining the unblemished record of value, fair-dealing, and high ethical standards that has always been the firm's hallmark." By the time this is over, "Madoff scheme" may be the new name for mass financial fraud.

This immense rip-off can only erode market confidence at a time when it is already in dangerously short supply. Unlike Ponzi, Mr. Madoff operated in a modern regulatory environment in which numerous authorities, state and federal, were supposed to keep an eye out for such scams. Others in the financial business spotted warning signs early on. A competitor, Harry Markopolos, wrote the Securities and Exchange Commission nine years ago that "Madoff Securities is the world's largest Ponzi scheme." Mr. Markopolos repeated those warnings over the years. Last year, hedge fund adviser Aksia sent a letter to its clients noting a list of irregularities at Madoff Securities, including the fact that it provided only paper trading records, which are easily forged. Mr. Madoff's auditor was an obscure three-employee accounting firm. But the regulators slept; several SEC reviews over the years found nothing but technical violations.

"Deeply troubling" is SEC Chairman Christopher Cox's appropriate assessment of his agency's failure to catch the Madoff fraud, which seems to have occurred not only on his watch, but also on that of two predecessors. Hindsight is 20-20, and even when someone blows the whistle, it can be devilishly hard to unmask a skilled con man, especially one like Mr. Madoff, who was a former chairman of the board of Nasdaq and enjoyed relationships with financiers, philanthropists and politicians the world over. Nevertheless, if this scandal demonstrates anything, it is how easily even the most sophisticated investors can be gulled—and that the general public needs alert and aggressive government regulation. Regulators let the people down in this case, big-time. That must be investigated as urgently as Mr. Madoff's alleged crimes.

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"JENKINS, AS YOU and I ARE the ONLY ONES LEFT in the COMPANY, ON the COUNT OF THREE, WE'LL LAY EACH OTHER OFF and ESCORT ONE ANOTHER OFF the PREMISES."

They're having babies. Are we helping?

By PATRICK WELSH
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—The girls gather in small groups outside suburban T.C. Williams High School most mornings, standing with their babies on their hips, talking and giggling like sorority sisters. Sometimes their mothers drop the kids (and their kids) off with a carefree smile and a wave. As I watch the girls carry their children into the day-care center in our new school building, I can't help wondering what Sister Mary Avelina, my 11th-grade English teacher, would have thought.

OK, I'm an old guy from the 1950s. But even in these less censorious times, I'm amazed—and concerned—by the apparently nonchalant attitude these girls and their mothers exhibit daily. Last I heard, teen mothers are still a major concern: They're less likely to finish school and more likely to live in poverty; their children are more likely to have difficulties in school and with the law; and on and on.

But none of that seems to register. "Some girls seem to be really into it," says T.C. senior Mary Ball. "They are embracing their pregnancies."

Nor is the sight of a pregnant classmate much of a surprise anymore. "When I was in middle school, I'd be shocked to see a pregnant eighth-grader," says Ball. "Now it seems so ordinary that we don't even talk about it."

Teenage pregnancy has been bright on American radar screens for the past year: TV teen starlet Jamie Lynn Spears's pregnancy caused a minor media storm last December, and the pregnant-teen movie "Juno" won Oscar nods. Bristol Palin, daughter of Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, brought the issue front and center during the recent presidential campaign. But the picture I see is more troubling than any of those high-profile pregnancies make it seem.

The somber statistics about teen motherhood are the reason the day-care center was opened in T.C. Williams two years ago. The idea is to keep the girls in school and let them get their diplomas. I want to help my students succeed in every way possible, and I know these girls need support. But I can't help thinking we're going at this all wrong.

On the surface, suburban Alexandria, Va., seems to be striving to stem teen pregnancy. Every high school student must take a "family life" course that teaches about birth control, sexually transmitted disease and pregnancy. Near the school is the Adolescent Health Center, which provides birth control. The Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy sponsors workshops for parents and teens.

But none of this hits teens with the message that getting pregnant is a disaster. And within the school, it's if teachers and administrators are afraid to address the issue for fear of offending student parents.

Once a girl gets pregnant, the school leaps in to do everything for her. But is it possible that all this assistance—with little or no com-

ment about the kids' actions—is making it easier for girls to make a bad choice and help them avoid the truth about the consequences?

And for many, it does seem to be a choice. "There's a myth that these pregnancies are accidental," says school nurse Nancy Runton. "But many of them aren't. I've known girls who've made 'I'll get pregnant if you get pregnant' pacts. It's a status thing. These girls go around school telling each other how beautiful they look pregnant, how cute their tummies look."

Nationally, the birth rate among teens, after falling 36 percent since 1990, went up 3 percent in 2006, the first increase in 15 years—mostly due to pregnancies among Hispanics. Sarah Brown, director of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, said Hispanics now have the nation's highest rate of teen pregnancy and births of any racial or ethnic group.

In our school of 2,211 students, at least 70 girls students are soon-to-be or already mothers. Social worker Terri Wright says that for many girls, getting pregnant before they turn 18 is a rite of passage. "They don't wear sweatshirts or baggy dresses to conceal their pregnancies," says Wright. "I get invitations to baby showers. Girls bring me pictures of their kids dressed up like little dolls."

"There is zero shame," agrees school nurse Runton. One girl walked into a colleague's class, announced that she was pregnant and began showing her sonogram around. Another proudly proclaimed that she was "going on maternity leave." The teacher tried to explain that maternity leave is a job benefit that doesn't apply to high school students.

"I don't personally accept it, but once a girl is pregnant, I have to be all open arms," Wright says.

The pregnant teens' classmates don't necessarily applaud the phenomenon, either. "These girls having babies are living in a dream world," says Lauren Heming, a senior in my AP English class. "They think that because the school is giving them all this help now, things will be easy for them when they graduate."

Many girls are under "great pressure to grow up fast by having sex," senior Kayla Tall says. "A lot of girls think that if they have the baby, they can keep hanging on to the boyfriend. In fact, these guys are little boys who have used the girls to prove themselves to each other."

Still, I can't begrudge someone like Cynthia Quinteros, 16, the help she needs to raise her one-year-old son. "If it wasn't for the day-care center, I would have to quit school to take care of Angel," she says. "My mother is a single mom, and my brother is 11. My mom has to work."

Cynthia's days are grueling. She gets up at 6 a.m., feeds and dresses Angel, and is at school by 7:50, dropping Angel off at the center. Her mom picks them both up at 3:15 p.m. At home, Cynthia eats, plays with Angel, starts homework and then leaves at 4:50 for

See **THEY'RE** on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY

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A gentler hegemony

D eclinism is in the air. The latest conventional wisdom is that the combination of the disastrous Iraq war, the military and economic rise of Asia, and the steep recession in the West has chastened America, ending its period of dominance in world affairs. It is time for us to be humble.

There is a lot of truth to this, but it goes too far. For decline itself—as a concept—is overrated. Britain's Royal Navy went into relative decline beginning in the 1890s, even as Great Britain remained powerful enough to help save the West in two world wars over the next half-century.

The proper analogy may be the Indian Mutiny in 1857 and 1858, after the orientalist and other pragmatists in the British power structure, who wanted to leave traditional India as it was, lost sway to Evangelical and Utilitarian reformers who wanted to more forcefully Christianize India—to make it in a values sense more like England. The reformers were good people: They helped abolish the slave trade and tried to do the same with the hideous practice of widow-burning. But their attempts to bring the fruits of Western civilization, virtuous as they were, to a far-off corner of the world played a role in a violent revolt against imperial authority.

Yet the debacle did not signal the end of the British Empire, which expanded for nearly another century. Rather, it signaled a transition away from an ad hoc imperium fired occasionally by an ill-disciplined lust to impose its values abroad—and to a calmer, more pragmatic and soldiering empire built on trade, education and technology.

That is akin to where we are now, post-Iraq: calmer, more pragmatic and with a military—especially a Navy—that, while in relative decline, is still far superior to any other on Earth. Near the end of the Cold War, the U.S. Navy had almost 600 ships; it is down to 280. But in aggregate tonnage that is still more than the next 17 navies combined. Our military secures the global commons to the benefit of all nations.

Without the U.S. Navy, the seas would be unsafe for merchant shipping, which, in an era of globalization, accounts for 90 percent

of world trade. We may not be able to control events on land in the Middle East, but our Navy and Air Force control all entry and exit points to the region. The multinational anti-piracy patrols that have taken shape in the Strait of Malacca and the Gulf of Aden have done so under the aegis of the U.S. Navy. Sure the economic crisis will affect shipbuilding, meaning the decline in the number of our ships will continue, and there will come a point where quantity affects quality. But this will be an exceedingly gradual transition, which we will assuage by leveraging naval allies such as India and Japan.

Then there are the dozens of training deployments around the world that the U.S. military, particularly Army Special Forces, conducts in any given week. We are all over Africa, Asia and Latin America with these small missions that increase America's diplomatic throw-weight without running the risk of getting us bogged down. Aside from Iraq and Afghanistan, our military posture around the world is generally light, lethal and highly mobile. We have been quietly reducing land forces in South Korea while compensating with a more effective air and naval presence. In Colombia, platoon-size numbers of Green Berets have been instrumental in fighting narco-terrorists; in Algeria, such training teams have helped improve our relationship with that formerly radical Arab country. Such stripped-down American military deployments garner no headlines, but they are a formula that works.

The Marines, after becoming virtually desert forces since 2001, will return to their expeditionary roots aboard amphibious ships in the Greater Indian Ocean and Western Pacific. American military power is not going away. But instead of being in-your-face, it will lurk just over the horizon. And that will make all the difference.

In sum, we may no longer be at Charles Krauthammer's "Unipolar Moment," but neither have we become Sweden. Declinism of the sort being preached will go immediately out of fashion at the world's next humanitarian catastrophe, when the very people enraged at the U.S. military because of Iraq will demand that it lead a coalition to save lives. We might have intervened in Darfur had we not been bogged down in Iraq; after Cyclone Nargis,

By ROBERT D. KAPLAN

Special to The Washington Post

Robert D. Kaplan is a national correspondent for the Atlantic and a senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security.



our ships would have provided large-scale relief, had Burma's military government allowed them to proceed. As world population rises, and with vast urban areas with tottering infrastructures in the most environmentally and seismically fragile zones, the opportunities for U.S. military-led disaster relief will be legion. The American military remains a force for good, a fact that will become self-evident in the crises to come.

Of course we are entering a more multipolar world. The only economic growth over the next year or two will come from developing nations, notably India and China. But there are other realities, too. We should not underestimate the diplomatic and moral leverage created by the combination of the world's most expeditionary military and a new president who will boast high approval ratings at home and around the world. No power but the United States has the wherewithal to orchestrate an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal, and our intervention in Iraq has not changed that fact. Everyone hates the word, but the United States is still a hegemon of sorts, able to pivotally influence the world from a position of moral strength.

Yet American hegemony post-Iraq will be as changed as Britain's was after the Indian Mutiny. It will be a more benign and temperate version of what transpired in recent years. Henceforth, we will shape coalitions rather than act on our own. For that, after all, is the essence of a long and elegant decline: to pass responsibility on to like-minded others as their own capacities rise.

The moral of Madoff's tale

In one of his more melancholy moods, Isaac Newton mused that he could measure the movement of distant celestial bodies but could not gauge the magnitude of human folly.

It's a reflection with a certain compelling relevance given the stunning news that one of the country's most respected securities traders, Bernard L. Madoff, allegedly has swindled investors out of at least \$50 billion. It's a staggering sum, one that approaches the ghastly totals rolled up by such epochal corporate frauds as Enron and Worldcom. More staggering yet is the roster of victims, which includes not only banks but high-flying hedge funds, professional investors such as Mortimer Zuckerman, cultural luminaries such as Elie Wiesel and Steven Spielberg, an Orthodox Jewish school and a variety of other charitable foundations.

Madoff, moreover, was not some brash outsider. For nearly half a century, he and the firm he founded have been pillars of Wall Street. He and his brother helped create NASDAQ and helped lead the securities trading industry's transformative conversion to electronic trading.

Robert Graves dismissively quipped that while there is no money in poetry, neither is there poetry in money. As we've all recently learned, there sometimes is the stuff of other literary genres: farce and tragedy. There's a little of each in the proud declaration that was featured on the Web site Madoff's firm maintained:

"In an era of faceless organizations owned by other equally faceless organizations, Bernard L. Madoff Investment Securities LLC harks back to an earlier era in the financial world: The owner's name is on the door. Clients know that Bernard Madoff has a personal interest in maintaining the unblemished record of value, fair-dealing and high ethical standards that has always been the firm's hallmark."

In retrospect, it's a sentiment that brings to mind not Graves but Groucho Marx—"The secret to life is honesty and fair dealing. If you can fake that, you've got it made." The breathtaking hypocrisy of publishing such a declaration suggests a lesson to be learned, and a mystery to be pondered.

The lesson is one that becomes clearer with each excruciating turn of the Wall Street screw. The long, bipartisan experiment with financial deregulation has failed utterly. The argument that a return to rigorous oversight will somehow stifle Wall Street's "creativity" is no longer convincing. Whatever its theoretical costs, regulation is dramatically cheaper than intervention. And absolutist insistence on the superiority of "individual choice" and "free markets" now is exposed as so much vacant rhetoric.

Any system that permits a scam artist such as Madoff to deceive not just widows and orphans but also sophisticated investors, such as Fairfield Greenwich Group's Walter Noel and Hollywood's Jeffrey Katzenberg, isn't a market at all; it's a shooting gallery. We need, moreover, to re-regulate our securities markets because, if we don't, foreign investors—like the European banks Madoff conned—simply will walk away from Wall Street, an exodus that will fatally undermine America's position in the globalized financial system.

Then there's the mystery. How could so many sophisticated investors and people dazzlingly accomplished in their own fields allow themselves to be deceived in this way? Partly, of course, it's a matter in many cases of bad advice; partly, it's another example of falling for what might be called "the smartest guy in the room" fallacy. That was the underlying principle of Enron's con. You create a smoke screen of impenetrable complexity around your opera-

grams and have no insurance. So when they get pregnant, a whole tax-supported industry kicks into action: The Health Department assigns a nurse to the girl, a group called Resource Mothers is notified to pick girls up at school or home and drive them to doctor's appointments, and day care is planned for the child. The school dietitian plans nutritious meals for the mothers. The federally funded WIC program provides free formula, milk, cheese, peanut butter and the like to the teens and their babies. In Virginia, girls ages 13 and up are eligible for free reproductive services: prenatal care, hospital visits and delivery.

According to a study by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, teen childbearing nationwide cost taxpayers \$9.1 billion in 2004. Teens 17 and under account for \$8.6 billion of that total, or an average of \$4,080 per teen mother annually.

It's hard to say whether other school districts do any better at discouraging teen pregnancy. According to Brown, school sex-ed

By TIM RUTTEN

(c) 2008, Los Angeles Times

Rutten is a Times columnist. E-mail Rutten at timothy.rutten@latimes.com.



tions and call it brilliant innovation. So long as you go on delivering bankable returns that can't have any other honest explanation, some people—even sophisticated ones—simply will assume that it's because you're smarter than everybody else.

Madoff's fund purportedly relied on a complex trading strategy, executed according to a supposedly proprietary algorithm. The truth about Wall Street, however, isn't that dissimilar from what writer William Goldman once said about Hollywood—when it comes to what works or doesn't work, nobody knows anything. When it comes to finance and investing, nobody is that much smarter than all the other smart guys.

So why do people insist on believing otherwise? That brings us back to Newton. Con men fatten not so much on their own talent for deceit as on their victims' penchant for self-deception. Sadly, the world's Bernie Madoffs will be with us for as long as some people believe that good fortune has inexplicably handed them an exemption from the laws of gravity—that, for them, what goes up must not necessarily come down.

THEY'RE

From Page 10

her supermarket cashier's job. She gets home at 10:10, does a little homework and goes to bed.

Cynthia says she wasn't trying to get pregnant: Since she was 13, she got a shot of the contraceptive DMPA/Depo-Provera every three months at the teen health clinic. Cynthia would tell her mom that she had to stay after school and then go to the clinic, but when her mother insisted she come home right away, she missed her shots and got pregnant at 15. She says that all her friends who have babies wish they had waited.

"They've learned the hard way," she says. "None of them want to have another baby now."

Most of the mothers are in free and reduced school-lunch pro-

grams nationwide are a patchwork that includes everything from required HIV/AIDS education to using students as peer counselors to abstinence-only programs. No one really knows what's working where. At T.C., almost every adult involved in helping our girls seems to be at a loss.

Cynthia Quinteros, however, has a theory. "I feel that the community is afraid to talk about all the girls who are getting pregnant," she says. "Once you get pregnant, they do everything for you, but they ought to be doing all they can do to show girls how difficult their lives will be if they have a baby. I love Angel, but if I didn't have him I wouldn't have to work after school, I could study more, I could be a normal teenager."






Out of the mouths of babes.

Welsh teaches English at T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Va.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
				
Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Showers	▲84 ▼76
Palau	Showers	▲88 ▼77
Yap	Partly Sunny	▲88 ▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲89 ▼80
Pohnpei	Showers	▲86 ▼75
Kosrae	Mostly Sunny	▲88 ▼77
Majuro	Rain	▲83 ▼76

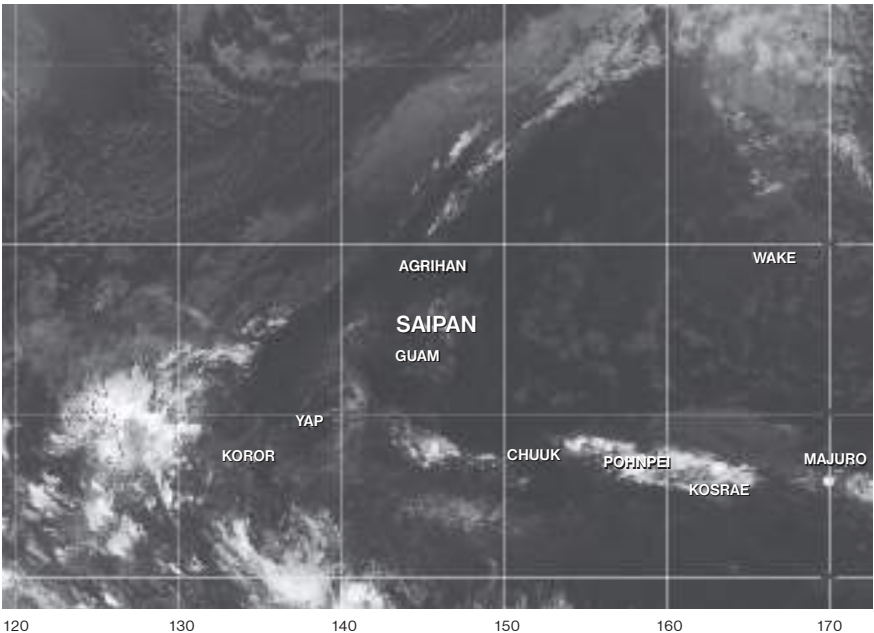
Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲71 ▼59
Beijing	Partly Sunny	▲36 ▼10
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲74 ▼61
Honolulu	Showers	▲79 ▼71
London	Showers	▲52 ▼43
Los Angeles	Partly Sunny	▲60 ▼46
Manila	Partly Sunny	▲84 ▼73
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	▲69 ▼54
Miami	Sunny	▲80 ▼66
New York	Snow	▲28 ▼27
Osaka	Sunny	▲56 ▼42
Paris	Showers	▲47 ▼38
Pusan	Showers	▲52 ▼39
Rome	Cloudy	▲51 ▼31
Salem	Cold	▲33 ▼31
San Francisco	Cloudy	▲53 ▼42
Seoul	Cloudy	▲31 ▼20
Tokyo	Showers	▲57 ▼41
Washington, DC	Cloudy	▲40 ▼37

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
1:21AM Today	High Tide:	1.4 Feet
7:30AM Today	Low Tide:	0.6 Feet
2:11PM Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
9:16PM Today	Low Tide:	0.5 Feet

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, FRIDAY, DEC. 19, 2008

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward from 25N145E to 15N137E then continues as a shearline to beyond 130E at 11N. Cloudiness and patchy rain can be found along and up to 250 miles northwest of the front and shearline. A few thunderstorms also exist near the front within 50 miles of a line extending northeastward from 13N135E to 18N138E. A near-equatorial trough runs southeastward from 3N130E to end near EQ135E. Convergent winds in the vicinity of the trough are causing scattered showers and a few thunderstorms south of Yap and Koror or southwest of a line extending southeastward from 5N130E to EQ144E. Trade-wind convergence is generating scattered showers west of Chuuk within 50 miles of a line extending southeastward from 18N147E to 17N151E and also over Pohnpei and Majuro between 6N and 10N from 157E to 180.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:38AM	5:51 PM
Sunday	6:38AM	5:52 PM
Monday	6:39AM	5:52 PM
Tuesday	6:39AM	5:53 PM
Wednesday	6:40AM	5:53 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	12:21AM	12:30 PM
Sunday	1:11AM	1:07 PM
Monday	2:01AM	1:46 PM
Tuesday	2:51AM	2:26 PM
Wednesday	3:43AM	3:10 PM

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 - BUSINESS
Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
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Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
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Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.
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- Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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 - Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
 - Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
 - Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
 - For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.
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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 20, 2008

DEPARTURES	ARRIVALS
Saipan-Rota CO9597 11:50am 12:25pm 1,7	Rota-Saipan CO 9598 3:25am 4:00am 5,6
Saipan-Guam CO9317 5:00am 5:50am Daily CO9313 8:30am 9:20am Daily CO9597 11:50am 1:20pm 1,7 via Rota CO9601 12:30pm 1:20pm 2,3,4,5,6 CO9603 3:30pm 4:20pm Daily CO9605 6:30pm 7:20pm Daily CO9599 9:30pm 10:20pm Daily	Guam-Saipan CO 9316 2:30am 3:20am 1,2,3,4,7 CO9598 2:30am 4:00am 5,6 via Rota CO9596 7:00am 7:50am Daily CO9600 10:20am 11:10am Daily CO9602 2:00pm 2:50pm Daily CO9604 5:00pm 5:50pm Daily CO9606 8:00pm 8:50pm Daily
Saipan-Narita NW 099 5:00am 7:40am Daily NW 078 8:25am 1:30pm Daily NW 075 4:55pm 7:30pm Daily	Narita-Saipan NW 076 10:15am 2:40pm Daily NW 077 6:25pm 1:25am+1 Daily NW 100 8:45pm 1:15am+1 Daily
Saipan-Osaka OZ 119 4:00am 6:40am 1,4,6 NW 083 4:30pm 7:20pm Daily	Osaka-Saipan OZ 120 9:50pm 2:20am+1 3,5,7 NW 084 10:40am 3:10pm Daily
Saipan-Nagoya NW 078 8:25am 11:05am Daily	Nagoya-Saipan NW 077 9:00pm 1:25am+1 Daily
Saipan-Incheon OZ 604 2:10am 6:00am 1 OZ 604 2:40am 6:30am 2,3,4,5,6,7 OZ 606 3:20pm 7:00pm Daily	Incheon-Saipan OZ 605 9:00am 2:20pm Daily OZ 603 7:40pm 1:00am+1 7 OZ 603 8:10pm 1:30am+1 1,2,3,4,5,6
Saipan-Busan OZ 608 3:50am 7:20am 1,4,5,7	Busan-Saipan OZ 607 9:30pm 2:40am+1 3,4,6,7
Saipan-Shanghai FM 844 2:50am 5:40am 2,6	Shanghai-Saipan FM 843 7:15pm 1:50am+1 1,5
Rota-Guam CO 9597 12:50pm 1:20pm 1,7	Guam-Rota CO 9598 2:30am 3:00am 5,6
Guam-Manila CO 893 5:50pm 9:10pm 3,5 via Koror CO 933 8:00pm 9:40pm Daily PR 111 6:00am 7:50am 1,2,4,6,7	Manila-Guam CO 892 10:10pm 5:30am+1 3,5 via Koror CO 934 11:10pm 4:40am+1 Daily PR 110 10:10pm 4:00am+1 1,3,5,6,7
Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)	

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota				FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 100 7:00am 7:30am Daily				FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 100 7:50am 8:20am Daily				FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota				FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 200 9:00am 9:30am Daily				FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
FRE 200 9:50am 10:15am Daily				Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
Guam-Rota				FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 300 4:00pm 4:30pm Daily				FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 300 4:50pm 5:25pm Daily				FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
Saipan-Rota				FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 400 6:00pm 6:30pm Daily				FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 400 6:45pm 7:15pm Daily				FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian				FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 101 6:45am 6:55am Daily				FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 103 7:30am 7:40am Daily				FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 105 8:00am 8:10am Daily				FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 107 8:40am 8:50am Daily				FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily
FRE 109* 9:10am 9:20am Daily							
FRE 111* 10:45am 10:55am Daily							



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Schedule of Religious Services																										
CATHOLIC																										
Mt. Carmel Cathedral Sunday Mass: 6am, 9am, 11am and 6pm Monday-Saturday: 6am Wednesday: 6am and 6pm																										
Korean Center Sunday: 10:30am Wednesday: 10am Thursday-Friday: 8pm Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm																										
Kristo Rai Parish Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am Monday- Saturday: 6am Wednesday: 6am and 6pm Saturday: 6am and 6pm																										
Nuestra Senora De Soledad Parish Wednesday Mass: 6pm First Friday Healing Mass: 6pm Saturday Mass: 6pm Sunday Masses: 7:30am & 9am																										
Saint Jude Parish Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am Wednesday and Thursday: 6pm																										
San Antonio Parish Sunday: 6am and 8am Tuesday and Friday: 6pm																										
San Francisco de Borja-Rota Sunday: 6am and 8am Monday-Saturday: 6am Wednesday: 6pm																										
San Isidro-Rota Sunday: 5am and 10am Monday-Wednesday: 7pm Thursday-Saturday: 5am and 7pm																										
San Jose (Oleai) Parish Sunday: 6am and 7:30am Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday: 6pm																										
San Roque Parish Sunday: 9am Wednesday: 6pm Saturday: 10:30am																										
San Vicente Parish Sunday: 6am, 9am and 6pm Monday-Saturday: 6pm																										
Santa Remedios Sunday: 7:30am Tuesday: 6pm Saturday: 10am-Baptism																										
Santa Soledad Sunday: 7:30am																										
PROTESTANT																										
Born Again Christian (Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8-10:30pm Saturday Tagalog Service: 8-10:30pm Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am Sunday School for Children: 10-11am Sunday Filipino Service: 7-9pm																										
Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan Sunday School: 9am Sunday Morning Worship: 10am Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm																										
Chinese Christian Church of Saipan Worship Services: Sunday, 10am and 7:30pm Bible Study: Tuesday-Friday, 9:25pm																										
Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan Worship/Study Opportunities Adult Sunday School: 9am Youth Sunday School: 9am English Worship Service Sunday: 10am Sunday Service: 5:30pm Worship/Fellowship Sunday: 9:30pm Evangelism/Follow-up: Sunday/Monday: 1:30/7:30pm Worship Team: Monday/Saturday-9pm; Cell Groups Tuesday: 7:30pm Mid-week Service: 7:30pm Prayer Meeting Wednesday: 7:30pm Leader's Bible Study Friday: 7:30 pm Cornerstone School of Ministry Saturday: 7:30pm																										
Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan St. Paul's Episcopal Church Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 9:00am Place: Vicarage, Chalan Laulau, Call 235-0545 for directions																										
Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan Worship Service: 9am GBI Classes: 4-6pm Prayer Meeting: Monday-Saturday: 6am Sunday: 7am Home Cell Bible Study: Wednesday-Friday: 7pm Youth Service: Friday: 5:30pm																										
Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan Wednesday: 7:45pm (Tagalog) Thursday: 5:30am (English); 7:45 pm (English) Saturday: 5:30am (Tagalog); 7:45pm (Tagalog) Sunday: 6:45am (English) Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)																										
Immanuel United Methodist Church Koblerville Sunday Services 9:00 AM Place of the church-next to Mt. Carmel Cathedral on Chalan Kanoa Dr. • Tel: 322-6158 Pastor JJ Matsumoto																										
Immanuel Methodist Church (Filipino Congregation) Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal 8:00am-Church Service (Tagalog)																										
9:15am-Sunday School Wednesday: 6:30pm, home group 8:00pm-Prayer Meeting Thursday: 7:30pm-Choir Practice (Church) Saturday: 8:00pm-Choir Practice (Parsonage)																										
Jesus is Lord Church, Saipan English Service: 9-11am, Sunday Tagalog Service: 6-8pm, Sunday																										
Korean Presbyterian Church, Saipan Sunday School: 8:20am Sunday Adult: 10am Sunday Adult: 11:30am Sunday Evening: 7:30pm Wednesday: 8pm																										
Life in the Son Christian Fellowship, Saipan Sunday Worship Service: 10am- 12noon Tuesday: Leadership Institute 7pm-10pm Wednesday: Corporate prayer 7pm-8pm Last Friday of the month-prayer: 7pm-11pm Friday: Youth on Fire: 7pm-9pm Tel. No. 235-LIFE (5433)																										
Marianas Baptist Church, Saipan English Worship Service: 9-10:30am Evening Worship Service: 6-7pm Children Sunday School: 9-10:30am Tagalog Sunday School: 11am-12pm English Sunday School: 11am-12pm Korean Worship Service: 11am-12pm Wednesday Prayer Meeting: English, 7pm-8pm Korean: 8:30pm-9:30pm																										
Missions Connection Ministry Every Sunday Celebrations: 10am (English), 6pm (Tagalog) Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm Youth Impact Friday: 7pm Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm																										
Northern Marianas Christian Church Sunday Worship Service 10am Fina Sisu Housing FS#1 (Child care will be provided) Friday Services @ 7pm Fina Sisu FS#1 for more info pls. contact Ryan 484-2620																										
Saipan Bible Fellowship Church Sunday School: 9:30-10am Divine Worship: 10am-11:30am Evening Service: 7pm-8:30pm Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8pm-9pm																										
Saipan Christian Church Sunday: 7:30am-10am Sunday: 6:30 pm -9pm Monday: 8 pm -10pm (Prayer Meeting) Thursday: 8pm-10pm (Cell Groups)																										
Saipan Church of Christ Sunday Bible Class: 9am Sunday Worshop: 10am Sunday Worship English: 6pm Sunday Worship Tagalog: 7pm Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30pm																										
Saipan Community Church (Sunday Services) Palau Service: 7:30am-9am English Service: 10am-11:30am Chuukese Service: 1pm-2:30pm Filipino Service: 5:00pm-7:00pm																										
Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Saipan (Saturday Church Services) Sabbath School Program: 9-10am Lesson Study: 10-10:40am Divine Service: 11-12pm Visitation: 3-4pm Adventist Youth Program: 4:30-5:30pm Sundown Worship: 6-7pm																										
First Baptist Church (Formerly Saipan Baptist Church) Afetna St., San Antonio Sunday <table><tr><td></td><td>9am</td><td>Sunday school</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>10am</td><td>Regular worship</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>6pm</td><td>worship</td></tr><tr><td>Wednesday</td><td>7pm</td><td>worship</td></tr></table> Everyone is warmly welcome to attend our worship services. Transportation is readily available to anyone who needs a ride to our church. For further information, please call Pastor David M. Mclure at 234-1939/235-7779.				9am	Sunday school		10am	Regular worship		6pm	worship	Wednesday	7pm	worship												
	9am	Sunday school																								
	10am	Regular worship																								
	6pm	worship																								
Wednesday	7pm	worship																								
Thy Word Ministries Saipan Faith Center Phone 234-0209 New Christian Charismatic Church Service located in Chalan Paio, Beach Road in the Sablan building on the 2nd floor above Subway Sandwiches. Senior Pastors: George & Gail Kamakahi Asst. Pastors: Eric & Penny Sakaguchi Service Times Sunday 10:00am Worship Service Sunday 7pm Discipleship Classes Tuesday 10:00am Bible Studies Tuesday 6:00pm Intercessory Prayer Tuesday 7:00pm Music Practice Wednesday 7:00pm Mid-Week Service Saturday 10:00am Evangelism																										
Upper Room International Ministries Sunday 5:30am-6:30am Morning prayer <table><tr><td></td><td>7am-9am</td><td>English service</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>7am-9am</td><td>Sunday school</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>10am-12noon</td><td>English service,</td></tr><tr><td>Koblerville</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Wednesday</td><td>7pm-9pm</td><td>Prayer meeting</td></tr><tr><td>Saturday</td><td>7pm-9pm</td><td>Tagalog service</td></tr><tr><td>Venue:</td><td>Jason Presbyterian Church</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Gualo Rai, Saipan</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> Victory Chapel Christian Fellowship Church Sunday School: 9:30am Sunday AM Worship:10:30am Sunday PM Worship:7:00am Wed Worship: 7:30pm Prayer 45 min. Prior to Service Times Morning Prayer: 6-8am M-S				7am-9am	English service		7am-9am	Sunday school		10am-12noon	English service,	Koblerville			Wednesday	7pm-9pm	Prayer meeting	Saturday	7pm-9pm	Tagalog service	Venue:	Jason Presbyterian Church		Gualo Rai, Saipan		
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Gualo Rai, Saipan																										

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

December 20,1999

Widen tobacco ban
Because existing law is not strong enough to deter minors from buying and using tobacco products on the islands, legislation underway in the House of Representatives will raise the age of prohibition from 18 to 21 years old. Its proponent, Rep. Malua T. Peter, said restricting access to tobacco products will ensure protection of minors from the harmful effects of tobacco smoking which she noted has become a serious threat in the CNMI. Under House Bill 11-509, Ms. Peter will seek amendments to Public Law 11-75 or the Tobacco Act to tighten penalty against those below 21 years old who are found violating the law with fine of up to \$2,000, a one-year imprisonment or community service of not more than 350 hours.

Junk appeal on Senate apportionment
Lawyers for the federal government as well as for the Tinian and Rota legislative delegation have asked the U.S. Supreme Court to junk an appeal filed in connection with a district court ruling that upheld the present CNMI Senate composition. The party argued in court papers that the complaint by Representative-elect Stanley T. Torres and lawyer Jeanne Rayphand invoking “one person, one vote” does not have basis to warrant review by the Supreme Court. They said that the decision by the federal district court in the Northern Marianas should be affirmed to quash further attempt to change the three-member representation in the Senate by each district of Saipan, Tinian and Rota.

December 20,2000

‘Shooting resort’ gets Senate nod
The Senate yesterday finally cleared the controversial measure allowing high-powered guns in the proposed “shooting resorts” in the Northern Marianas amid a threat by foreign investors to pull out if the government continues to drag the issue. HB 12-212 amending the strict Weapons Control Act of the CNMI heads to the lower house again for voting on the amendments made by senators to address safety concerns raised by some sectors in this island community. House Floor Leader Oscar M. Babauta, main sponsor of the measure, said they may consider it for passage during a scheduled special session today if the changes are acceptable to the members.

Postal Service notes 25% drop in volume of mails
Lolita Manalo started receiving over a dozen of Christmas cards mailed to her by friends and relatives from the Philippines as early as the first week of November last year. She has not received anything yet for this year. However, Ms. Manalo now spends more time in front of the Internet-hooked computer browsing electronic greeting cards which have practically replaced those she had to pick up from her mailbox last year. The advent of modern technology and the reliability of fast-transmission through the modem, which could transpire in a matter of seconds, has taken its toll on some of the world’s traditional services.

December 20,2001

House lifts worker importation ban
The measure repealing the moratorium on the hiring of nonresident workers hurdled the tough-and very vocal-opposition put up by the House minority yesterday to make it to the next phase in the legislative process. With a majority vote of eight and six others voting no, the House of Representatives passed House Bill 12-415 during Wednesday morning’s regular session, in a bid to repeal Public Law 11-6, which House Speaker Benigno R. Fitial described as an “anti-business law.” It was not an easy victory, though, with Reps. Heinz S. Hofschneider and Diego T. Benavente each making impassioned appeals and offering compelling reasons for the retention of Public Law 11-6.

Deeper cuts in 2002 earnings feared
The government has been advised to further reduce its revenue projection for the next fiscal year, as the Marianas Visitors Authority anticipates a 10-year slowdown in tourism-related activities that may be spurred by the Japanese market. Unless the CNMI government develops a new market for the islands’ travel sector, the MVA said economic forecasts for the Commonwealth remain dim. MVA Board Chair Dave M. Sablan cited the need to reduce the government’s operational expenses to arrest possible funding shortage in the next financial year.

Business

Bush considering ‘orderly’ auto industry bankruptcy

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Bush administration is looking at “orderly” bankruptcy as a possible way to deal with the desperately ailing U.S. auto industry, Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson said Thursday as carmakers readied more plant closings and a half million new jobless claims underscored the deteriorating national economy.

With General Motors, Chrysler and the rest of Detroit anxiously awaiting a White House decision on billions of dollars in emergency federal loans, Paulson said bankruptcy for Detroit automakers should be avoided if possible but that an orderly reorganization may be the best option to keep them from collapsing.

“If the right outcome is reorganization or bankruptcy, then isn’t it better to get there through an orderly process?” Paulson said in a speech to a business forum Thursday night in New York.

Paulson said it was too risky to simply let the automakers fail.

“When you look at the size of this industry and look at all those that it touches in terms of suppliers and dealers ... it would seem to be an imprudent risk to take,” he said.

President George W. Bush, asked earlier about an auto bailout, said he hadn’t decided what he would do but didn’t want to leave a mess for Barack Obama who takes office a month from Saturday. A White House decision on helping the troubled automakers could come as early as Friday.

Bush, like Paulson, spoke of the idea of bankruptcies orchestrated by the federal government as a possible way to go—without committing to it.

“Under normal circumstances, no question bankruptcy court is the best way to work through credit and debt and restructuring,” he said during a speech and question-and-answer session at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative Washington think tank. “These aren’t normal circumstances. That’s the problem.”

Paulson said Bush wants to avoid automakers filing for bankruptcy protection but that the No. 1 priority is putting automakers back on a viable path. Part of that effort, he said, would require all sides coming together to make sacrifices to boost competitiveness.

“It’s difficult to do such things outside of reorganization. But sometimes that can be successfully done,” Paulson said.

White House press secretary Dana Perino addressed the bankruptcy question earlier in the day and emphasized there were still several possible approaches to assisting the automakers, including short-term loans from the Treasury Department’s \$700 billion Wall Street bailout program.

Did Madoff act alone?

Many investors doubt it

NEW YORK (AP)—Bernard Madoff’s contention that he pulled off one of the biggest financial frauds in history without any help is being met with disbelief by his investors and experts in the securities industry. It normally takes a team of accountants, stock brokers, lawyers and more to operate the kind of multibillion-dollar investment fund that Madoff ran from the 17th floor of his Manhattan headquarters.

The firm had clients around the globe. Simply generating the detailed financial statements investors got in the mail every month would have been a monumental effort for just one person, observers said, even if those reports were pure fantasy.

“Someone had to create them. Someone had to create the appearance that there were returns,” said attorney Harry Susman, who represents several Madoff investors.

“The guy was 70 years old. Could he have done it himself? The computer systems would have needed to be extensive. Supposedly, he’s selling puts, buying puts, selling calls, buy-

Nation

Impeachment drive slowed against Illinois governor

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP)—Illinois lawmakers could be forced to build their impeachment case against Gov. Rod Blagojevich on a raft of relatively small grievances, rather than the blockbuster Senate-seat-for-sale allegations, for fear of undermining federal prosecutors' criminal investigation.

Members of the state House impeachment committee said Thursday they will do nothing that would interfere with the investigation by U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald. If Fitzgerald asks lawmakers not to interview certain witnesses, they will abide by that, they said.

"We do not want to get in the way of the United States attorney doing the work he does, and so whatever he says about where we can and can't go in our investigation, we are going to just simply say, 'Fine, sir,'" said state Rep. Lou Lang, a suburban Chicago Democrat.

The committee would then probably emphasize some lower-profile allegations of misconduct against Blagojevich. Among them: defying the Legislature, failing to honor reporters' Freedom of Information requests, and trading state jobs and contracts for campaign contributions.

The latest complications, along with other developments, suggest it could be more difficult to dislodge Blagojevich



Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich waves through car exhaust as he departs his home in Chicago, Thursday, Dec. 18, 2008. AP

than it appeared just a week ago. On Wednesday, the Illinois Supreme Court rejected a request to declare him unfit to serve, and Blagojevich's lawyer made it clear that the governor is not going down without a fight.

Federal prosecutors' case could be severely undermined—or at least greatly complicated—if Illinois lawmakers compel certain witnesses to testify under a grant of immunity. After the Iran-Contra scandal of the 1980s, the convictions of Oliver North and John Poindexter were thrown out after the courts determined that the cases against them were built too much on testimony they gave to Congress under a promise of immunity.

The impeachment committee sent Fitzgerald a letter Thursday formally asking for information about people mentioned by pseudonyms in the criminal complaint, and requesting his guidance on who can be called to testify. Fitzgerald refused to comment.

The panel adjourned until Monday, when members hoped to discuss any guidelines or restrictions Fitzgerald may place on them.

Committee members said the criminal charges against Blagojevich will

still play a part in the impeachment proceedings. If nothing else, lawmakers will be able to use the 76-page federal criminal complaint, which includes sworn statements from the FBI and damning excerpts from the governor's wiretapped conversations.

"I think everything's fair game," said Rep. Chapin Rose, a Republican.

Committee chairwoman Barbara Flynn Currie, a Chicago Democrat like the governor, noted that even before Blagojevich's arrest last week, some lawmakers were calling for his impeachment.

"We've got plenty of evidence out there of questionable activity on the part of the governor," she said.

The governor was arrested on charges that he schemed to see President-elect Barack Obama's vacant Senate seat for campaign cash or a plum job for himself. He was also accused of trying to strong-arm the Chicago Tribune into firing editorial writers who criticized him, and pressuring a hospital executive for campaign donations.

Outraged lawmakers appointed a committee to investigate Blagojevich and issue a recommendation on whether he should be impeached.

Report raps ex-White House pair on Iraq claims

WASHINGTON (AP)—Former White House Counsel Alberto Gonzales misled Congress when he claimed the CIA in 2002 approved information that ended up in the 2003 State of the Union speech about Iraq's alleged effort to buy uranium for its nuclear weapons program, a House Democrat said Thursday.

In a memo to the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, which he chairs, Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., also expressed skepticism

about assertions by then-national security adviser Condoleezza Rice that she was unaware of the CIA's doubts about the claim before President George W. Bush's speech.

The committee's Republicans do not endorse Waxman's report, said Frederick Hill, press secretary for Rep. Darrell Issa of California, the committee's top Republican.

Iraq's alleged attempt to buy uranium was one of the justifications

for the Bush administration's decision to go to war. The claim has since been repudiated.

Waxman said his investigation showed the CIA had warned at least four National Security Council officials not to allow Bush, in three speeches in 2002, to cite questionable intelligence that Iraq had attempted to obtain uranium. The sentences were stripped out of those speeches but made it into the State of the Union address.

Ill. court revives suit over 'morning-after' pill

CHICAGO (AP)—Illinois pharmacists who object to dispensing emergency contraception won another day in court to fight a rule they claim forces them to choose between their livelihood and conscience.

The Illinois Supreme Court on Thursday said the circuit court must consider a lawsuit brought by two pharmacists who claim they should not be required to dispense emergency contraception because it violates their religious beliefs. Lower courts

had dismissed those claims and refused to hear the case.

Gov. Rod Blagojevich in 2005 issued a rule prohibiting pharmacies from turning away women seeking emergency contraception, sometimes called the morning-after pill.

The medication, marketed by Montvale, N.J.-based Barr Pharmaceuticals Inc. as Plan B, reduces the chance of pregnancy if taken within three days after sex. It works by preventing ovulation or fertilization and

interfering with implantation of a fertilized egg, which some people consider the equivalent of abortion.

"I cannot follow my religion's teachings and continue to be involved" in emergency contraception, said pharmacist Luke Vander Bleek, 45, a Catholic who runs pharmacies in Morrison, Sycamore and Genoa. Vander Bleek, who filed the lawsuit along with another pharmacist-business owner, said his stores don't stock or dispense emergency contraception.

Las Vegas gets record Dec. snowfall, 3.6 inches

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Flights resumed in and out of Las Vegas, but schools and highways were closed Thursday after a record-setting snowfall coated marquees on the Strip, weighed down palm trees and blanketed surrounding mountain areas. The city awoke to clear weather after a storm that left 3.6 inches at McCarran International Airport. It was biggest December snowfall on record there, and the worst for any month since a 7 1/2-inch accumulation in January 1979, forecasters said.

The storm Wednesday and early Thursday also dumped snow or rain and snarled travel in other parts of Nevada, much of southern California and parts of northern Arizona.

"It looks like Whoville, all snowy, but with less joy and more extreme misery," said Calen Weiss, 19, who was stuck Wednesday when snow in the Cajon Pass east of Los Angeles disrupted travel on Interstate 15.

Cajon Pass and another leg of Interstate 15 near the Nevada line both reopened by midday Thursday, while Interstate 5, the major route between

Northern and Southern California, partially reopened.

In Washington state, Seattle got a rare 4-inch accumulation, and the 19.4 inches of snow that piled up at Spokane International Airport smashed the 24-hour record total of 13 inches set in 1950. And snow continued to fall.

Spokane declared a "Condition Red" snow emergency, meaning crews will work around the clock until they complete a full city plow.

For Las Vegas, the storm left heavy wet accumulations of snow along the famed Strip. At least one carport toppled under the accumulated weight, authorities said, and motorists in Henderson parked their cars and walked home when tires spun as they tried to navigate slippery uphill climbs.

Thursday was the first snow day for Clark County schools since the 1979 storm, district spokesman Michael Rodriguez said.

Airlines resumed flights Thursday after canceling dozens of them late Wednesday, McCarran airport spokesman Jerry Pascual said.



ACROSS THE NATION

Schwarzenegger to veto Democrats' budget plan

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—Democratic lawmakers on Thursday pushed through an \$18 billion package to reduce California's burgeoning budget deficit, but Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said he would veto it because it didn't meet his demands for an economic recovery plan. Schwarzenegger said California will continue on a path toward "fiscal Armageddon" since Democrats sent him a "terrible budget" that didn't make deep enough cuts or include the kind of stimulus he wanted to boost the state's ailing economy. California's deficit is

expected to hit \$42 billion in the next 18 months. "This package that they are sending down does really only do one thing, and this is punish the people of California," he said at a news conference shortly after the vote. But Assembly Speaker Karen Bass, D-Los Angeles, said the Democratic package included economic stimulus provisions and other measures that should have satisfied the Republican governor.

Surgeon not guilty in Calif. organ harvesting case

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A San Francisco transplant surgeon accused of has-

tening the death of a man so his organs could be harvested was acquitted Thursday of dependent adult abuse in a case that led to national organ transplant reforms. Dr. Hootan Roozrokh was found not guilty in San Luis Obispo County Superior Court by a jury that deliberated for more than two days. He would have faced up to four years in prison had he been convicted. A judge dismissed two other felony counts in March. The case was believed to be the first of its kind brought against a transplant doctor in the United States. Roozrokh, 34, was accused of prescribing too much medication to Ruben Navarro, 26, when he died

in February 2006 at a San Luis Obispo hospital. He had a debilitating neurological disease and was in a coma after a heart attack. Roozrokh testified in his own defense, saying he did not try to hasten Navarro's death but did order painkillers to ensure the patient would not suffer when being withdrawn from life support.

More bones found near missing Fla. toddler's home

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—Investigators probing the disappearance of a Florida toddler say they've found more bones that appear to be a child's near where a

skull was found last week. Authorities have said they believe the skull belongs to Caylee Anthony because of its size and location. It turned up a few blocks from where the toddler lived with her mother and grandparents. The 2-year-old was reported missing in July. On Thursday, Orange County Sheriff's Capt. Angelo Nieves says authorities found further "significant" skeletal remains in the same area. None of the remains have been identified—the skull and earlier finds have been undergoing DNA and other testing. Caylee Anthony's mother Casey is being held on a first-degree murder charge in the toddler's death.

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Asia

Pet lovers protest cats on menu in China

GUANGZHOU, China (AP)—While animal lovers in Beijing protested the killing of cats for food on Thursday, a butcher in Guangdong province—where felines are the main ingredient in a famous soup—just shrugged her shoulders and wielded her cleaver. “Cats have a strong flavor. Dogs taste much better, but if you really want cat meat, I can have it delivered by tomorrow,” said the butcher, who gave only

her surname, Huang.

It was just this attitude that outraged about 40 cat lovers who unfurled banners in a tearful protest outside the Guangdong government office in Beijing. Many were retirees who care for stray felines they said were being rounded up by dealers.

“We must make them correct this uncivilized behavior,” said Wang Hongyao, who represented the group in submitting a

letter urging the provincial government to crack down on traders and restaurants, although they were breaking no laws.

The protest was the latest clash between age-old traditions and the new sensibilities made possible by China’s growing affluence. Pet ownership was once rare because the Communist Party condemned it as bourgeois and most people simply couldn’t afford a cat or dog.



A woman holding a picture of a trapped cat cries as she takes part in a protest, where animal-loving residents unfurled banners in urging a southern Chinese province to stop the “cruel slaughter” of cats for food, in Beijing, China, Thursday, Dec. 18, 2008.

India calls off high-profile Pakistan cricket tour

NEW DELHI (AP)—Cricket is one of the few things India and Pakistan agree on. But with New Delhi accusing Islamabad of not curbing Pakistani-based terrorists blamed for the Mumbai attack, India on Thursday canceled a cricket tour to Pakistan—a clear sign of a freeze in relations.

In the decades since gaining

independence from Britain in 1947, Pakistan and India have fought three wars and teetered on the brink several more times. Yet cricket is a national obsession for both countries and has helped thaw tensions.

India’s national cricket team went to Pakistan in 2004 for the national teams’ first full series

of matches in 14 years, a trip hailed as an optimistic sign as the nuclear-armed rivals got a fledgling peace process going.

That has been undone by last month’s Mumbai assault, which left 164 people and nine of the 10 attackers dead. Relations are strained again and the peace process is on ice.

ASIAN BRIEFS

SKorean lawmakers brawl over US free trade pact

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Brawling South Korean lawmakers tried to sledgehammer their way into a parliamentary meeting room barricaded by the ruling party as the National Assembly descended into chaos Thursday over a free trade agreement with the United States. Opposition parties were incensed by the ruling Grand National Party’s move to submit the agreement to a committee on trade, setting in motion the process for the accord to win approval in the legislature. Security staff and aides from the ruling party stood guard outside the room to keep opposition lawmakers away after the committee’s GNP-affiliated chairman invoked his right to use force to “keep order” in parliamentary proceedings. Scuffles broke out as dozens of opposition members and their aides attempted to push their way into the office. TV footage showed people from both sides shoving, push-

ing and shouting in a crowded hall at the National Assembly building amid a barrage of flashing cameras.

Afghan leader sends demands to US on troop conduct

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—The Afghan president has sent a list of demands to the United States government about troop conduct ahead of the arrival of more U.S. forces, pressing for cooperation with his government. President Hamid Karzai has repeatedly called for foreign troops to do more to prevent civilian deaths during strikes and raids. He also wants them to show more respect for the country’s traditional Muslim culture, in which men can cause great affront by entering a house with women inside. In a speech Thursday, he said he asked last month that the U.S. cooperate with the Afghan government and security forces in all its operations. “Part of that list was that they shouldn’t, on their own, en-

ter the houses of our people and bombard our villages and detain our people,” Karzai said.

HK police search for assailant in acid attack

HONG KONG (AP)—Hong Kong police said Thursday they are offering a reward in their search for an assailant who threw two bottles of acid into a crowd in a busy shopping district, burning dozens of people. Investigators are offering 100,000 Hong Kong dollars (\$12,900) for information leading to an arrest in Saturday’s attacks, police spokesman Michael Kwan said. Two plastic bottles filled with an unspecified acid were thrown from a building in the Mong Kok shopping district onto the street below, police said. Forty-six people suffered burns. Some victims rushed to find water to wash the burning liquid from their faces, eyes and hands, local media said. The victims, aged 14 to 53, were released from hospitals the same day after receiving treatment.

World

Rwandan massacre mastermind convicted

ARUSHA, Tanzania (AP)—A former Rwandan army colonel was convicted Thursday of genocide and crimes against humanity for masterminding the killings of more than half a million people in a 100-day slaughter in 1994. Survivors in Rwanda welcomed the watershed moment in a long search for justice.

The U.N. courtroom in Tanzania was packed for the culmination of the trial of Theoneste Bagosora, the highest-ranking Rwandan official to be convicted in the genocide. Onlookers

were silent as the 67-year-old was sentenced to life in prison.

“Let him think about what he did for the rest of his life,” said Jean Pierre Sagahutu, 46, in Rwanda, who lost his parents and seven siblings. He escaped by hiding in a septic tank for 2 1/2 months.

Former military commanders Anatole Nsengiyumva and Aloys Ntabakuze also were found guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity and sentenced to life in prison. The former chief of military operations, Brig. Gra-

tien Kabiligi, was cleared of all charges and released.

The U.N. Security Council created a tribunal in 1994 to prosecute those responsible for “genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.”

The 1994 genocide saw government troops, Hutu militia and ordinary villagers spurred on by hate messages broadcast on the radio going from village to village, butchering men, women and children. The consequences still shake the region.

Iraqi who threw shoes at Bush asks for pardon

BAGHDAD (AP)—The Iraqi journalist who hurled his shoes at President George W. Bush is begging for a pardon for what he described as “an ugly act,” the prime minister’s spokesman said Thursday.

Muntadhar al-Zeidi, a correspondent for an Iraqi-owned television station based in Cairo, Egypt, could face two years imprisonment for insulting a foreign leader. He

remained in custody Thursday night.

“It is too late to reverse the big and ugly act that I perpetrated,” al-Zeidi wrote in a letter delivered to Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, according to the prime minister’s spokesman.

The spokesman, Yassin Majid, told The Associated Press that al-Zeidi went on in the letter to recall an inter-

view he conducted with the prime minister in 2005 when al-Maliki invited him into his home, saying: “Come in, it is your home too.”

“So I ask for your pardon, excellency,” Majid quoted the letter as saying.

However, the journalist’s brother, Dhargham al-Zeidi, told the AP he was skeptical that his brother would write such a letter.

Shoppers flee as police, youths clash in Athens

ATHENS, Greece (AP)—Masked youths set up burning barricades and threw fire bombs and chunks of marble at riot police Thursday, after a protest march erupted into new fighting that sent Christmas shoppers and panicked parents fleeing to safety.

Mothers snatched children from a carousel in the main square. Waiters stumbled from cafes choking on tear gas fired by police at rioters trying to

burn the capital’s Christmas tree, replaced just days ago after another tree was torched.

After two weeks of unrelenting rioting set off by the fatal police shooting of a teenager, a slogan spray-painted outside the Bank of Greece summed up the mood as Greeks prepared for Christmas: “Merry crisis and a happy new fear.”

But protesters’ call for European-wide demonstrations of support—urged in banners defi-

antly unfurled from the ancient Acropolis on Wednesday—met with no apparent response.

Thursday’s clashes broke out in front of Parliament at Syntagma Square during a demonstration against police brutality. The Dec. 6 death of 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos unleashed rage that has fed off widespread dissatisfaction with economic hardship, social inequality and the unpopular conservative government’s policies.

WORLD BRIEFS

Arrests show fears of Saddam followers

BAGHDAD (AP)—The arrests of more than 20 security officials for allegedly trying to revive Saddam Hussein’s banned political party show how the Shiite-led government believes that supporters of the old regime still pose a threat—perhaps as much as al-Qaida or Iranian-backed militias. Iraqi officials said Thursday that up to 25 people from the three major security ministries have been arrested over the past week on accusations of conspiring to restore the Baath party, whose exiled leaders staunchly oppose the current government. But Interior Ministry spokesman Abdul-Karim Khalaf dismissed a report in The New York Times that the conspirators were planning a coup. He called the report “nonsense” and “baseless.” Other prominent Shiites made similar remarks and said the group appeared to be loosely organized. Another security official said most of those arrested were from the traffic department of the Interior Ministry and that the highest-ranking figure was a brigadier general. The official

spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not supposed to talk to media.

Hamas says won’t extend truce with Israel

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)—Two Hamas officials said the Islamic group would not extend a six-month truce with the Israelis as militants in the Gaza Strip fired rockets at southern Israel and Israel hit back with airstrikes Thursday. Hamas said previously that the cease-fire ends Friday, but Israel maintained the unwritten truce did not have an expiration date. Violence has already resumed, although at a lower level than before the truce took effect. On Thursday, Gaza militants fired 11 rockets and six mortar shells toward Israel. Israel’s military launched at least two airstrikes on rocket squads. “There is no chance of extending the calm,” Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum said in Gaza. He blamed Israel for the breakdown. In Lebanon, Hamas official Osama Hamdan told The Associated Press the truce would end Friday.

Nobel jurors face bribery probe for China trips

STOCKHOLM, Sweden (AP)—Nobel Prize jurors who accepted all-expenses-paid trips to China to discuss the coveted awards are being investigated on suspicion of bribery, a Swedish prosecutor said Thursday. Anti-corruption prosecutor Nils-Erik Schultz said he opened the probe to determine whether the trips in 2006 and 2008 were meant to influence the decisions of the Nobel committees. He declined to name the jurors or say how many were being investigated. The probe was prompted by a Swedish Radio report that said three jurors from the medicine, chemistry and physics committees were invited to China to explain the selection process and what it takes to win a Nobel Prize. Chinese authorities paid for their plane tickets, hotels and meals, the report said. If charged and convicted, the jurors would face fines or up to two years in prison. However, Swedish prosecutors often drop preliminary investigations without pressing charges.

Maharlika

PINOY LIFE IN THE MARIANAS

Saturday, December 20, 2008

450,000 overseas jobs available—POEA

By VERONICA UY
INQUIRER.NET

MANILA, Philippines—Despite reported job layoffs and work slowdowns due to the global financial crisis, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration on Thursday said there are still almost half a million unfilled job orders registered with it.

At a press conference, POEA administrator Jennifer Manalili also said her office has monitored a displacement of 2,247 overseas Filipino workers due to the economic meltdown.

She said most (or 2,087) were from Taiwanese companies involved in electronics, metal

2,247 OFWs lost work due to financial crisis

works, and semi-conductor manufacturing; the rest came from companies in Australia (75), Brunei (69), and London (16) involved in shipbuilding, garments, and the electrical and telecommunications industries, respectively.

At the same time, Manalili said deployment from January to November this year (1,221,829) increased 24.4 percent from 982,286 in the same period last year. Of the deployed, about 75 percent (919,606) were land-based and the rest (302,223) sea-based.

“This news breaking record is

translated to a daily average of 3,647 workers who found gainful employment abroad,” she said.

The top 10 destinations of new hired OFWs (177,477) were Saudi Arabia (61,164), United Arab Emirates (34,595), Qatar (21,352), Taiwan (14,660), Kuwait (8,326), Hong Kong (7,912), Canada (4,007), Bahrain (2,168), Singapore (2,069), and Australia (1,858); the rest (19,366) are to other destinations.

Manalili said the 450,062 active job orders are from all over the world.

These job orders, by re-

gion, are from the Middle East (313,868), Asia (80,225), Americas (31,341), Europe (9,852), Africa (8,265), Oceania (5,543), and Trust Territories (968).

The top 10 countries with the most job orders are: Saudi Arabia (93,764), 40,465 of these in production and transportation; United Arab Emirates (78,966), 31,453 of these in production and transportation; Qatar (72,771), 39,439 of these in production and transportation;

Kuwait (36,568), with the service sector accounting for 13,380; Hong Kong (26,592), also mostly

in the service sector, with 26,497; Taiwan (24,159), 22,454 of these in production and transportation; Oman (14,632), with 7,848 in the service sector;

Singapore (9,825), mostly in professional and technical sectors (3,147); Canada (5,526), mostly in the service sector (2,248); and Bahrain (3,705), mostly in service (1,088).

By sector, the job orders are for production and transportation (187,806), mostly for ordinary laborers, earth-moving operators, plumbers, pipe fitters, production foremen, and weld-

ers; the service sector (112,511) for household service workers and waiters; professional and technical (108,803) for nurses, engineers, and teachers;

Clerical (21,392) for receptionists; sales (10,748) for sales agents and demonstrators; administrative and management (5,107); agriculture/animal husbandry/forestry (1,498) for farmers; and the rest (2,197) do not fall under any category.

From January to December 9 this year, there have been some 705,876 job vacancies, 105,616 of which were added from October 1. “We have not received any cancellations so these are still active job orders,” Manalili said.

7 in 10 Filipinos won't lose hope in RP

By JOEL GUINTO
INQUIRER.NET

MANILA, Philippines—Nearly seven in 10 Filipinos refuse to believe the country is hopeless while five of 10 say they would not migrate to another country even if they had an opportunity, according to a Pulse Asia Inc. survey.

The survey, conducted from October 14 to 27, showed that 68 percent of respondents, when asked if they agreed with the statement that “This country is hopeless,” said they disagreed. Thirteen percent agreed while 18 percent were undecided.

Asked if they would migrate to another country if given the chance, 54 percent disagreed, 20 percent agreed, while 24 percent were undecided, the independent survey showed.

The study had a margin of error of +/-3 percent and a confidence level of 95 percent. It polled 1,200 adults nationwide.

Disagreement with the statement that the Philippines is hopeless was highest in Mindanao (78 percent), followed by the Visayas (72 percent), Metro Manila (69 percent), and Luzon (62 percent).

On the other hand, agreement with the statement that the country is hopeless is highest in Luzon (15 percent), followed by Metro Manila (14 percent), the Visayas (13 percent), and Mindanao (6 percent).

The percentage of the population that would rather stay in the country than migrate abroad was highest in Luzon (61 percent), statistically tied with Mindanao (60 percent), followed by the Visayas (43 percent), and Metro Manila (35 percent).



LANTERN PARADE

Fine arts students from the University of the Philippines, the country's premier university, help a fellow student, right, after she tripped while walking on very high-heeled shoes to showcase their creative designs for the traditional Christmas lantern parade at Manila's Quezon city Wednesday, Dec. 17, 2008. Thousands trooped to the university to watch participants in their innovative and colorful costumes for this annual celebration.

OFWs distrust OWWA in disputed survey

MANILA, Philippines—The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) on Thursday disputed the results of a survey conducted by a migrant labor advocacy group that showed that overseas Filipino workers view the OWWA with distrust and are largely uninformed about what the agency

is doing for them.

The OWWA criticized the methods used by the Quezon City-based Center for Migrants' Advocacy in its survey of 400 OFWs around the world.

It said the questions were slanted to provoke negative responses to support CMA's conclusions.

The survey findings, which

showed that a significant number of OFWs remained either unaware or misinformed about the role of the OWWA, resulted in “misleading conclusions,” said an OWWA statement prepared by Josephine Sanchez-Tobia, acting head of the agency's advocacy and social marketing division.

Rich nations still need migrants—IOM

MANILA, Philippines—As the global economic crisis continues to unravel, migrants will still be needed in rich countries, where demographic projections indicate that there will be twice as many people over 60 years old than chil-

dren, the International Organization for Migration said.

“Although the economic crisis is still unfolding and its full impact remains unclear, it would be counter-productive for governments in developed countries to close their doors

to migrants. Many of them are still needed in jobs that citizens in industrialized countries are unable or unwilling to take,” said IOM Director General William Lacy Swing in a statement on International Migrants' Day this Thursday.

LABOR FRONT

Alien boat crews and connecting flight passengers

By FERDIE PONCE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Q: Are alien crews of commercial boats that land temporarily in the CNMI required to show entry permit?

A: No entry permit is required provided that the alien crew member is sponsored by a marine or airways transportation company qualified to do business in the Commonwealth and a latter identifying the crew member and itinerary has been submitted to the Director. According to the CNMI Immigration Rules and Regulations, exclusion provisions and limitations on length of stay and movement of the alien crew may be applied.

The Regulations state that an alien who is serving as crew in any capacity required for normal operation and service on board a vessel (other than a fishing boat having its home or an operating base in the CNMI) or aircraft, who intends to land temporarily and solely in pursuant of the calling as a crew and to depart from the CNMI with the vessel or aircraft on which he arrived, may remain in the CNMI until the time of scheduled departure.

Q: Are aliens in a continuous connecting plane flight allowed outside the Saipan airport while waiting for their flight schedule?

A: The Regulations state that an alien in immediate and continuous transit through the Commonwealth may remain in the CNMI for as long as is required to meet a connecting flight. An alien in continuous transit may not be allowed outside of the airport facility while waiting for the connecting flight.

Q: How many days are alien cultural performers allowed to stay in the CNMI?

A: An alien who seeks to enter the CNMI for a period of less than 21 days for employment in artistic, cultural, educational, or scientific presentations, performances, professional sports events, or professional studies may be issued an entry permit for up to 21 days.

According to the Regulations, extensions for an additional 10 days may be granted at the discretion of the Immigration Director.

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2 dead as blasts rock Iligan City malls

Women planted bombs—police

ILIGAN CITY, Philippines—Explosions rocked two shopping centers here Thursday afternoon and two women were seen on the malls' videos planting the bombs, which killed a number of people and injured several others, authorities said.

Military and police said the two people were killed and 47 injured in the blasts at the Unicity shopping center at 1:35 p.m. and at the nearby Jerry's Shoppers Plaza 10 minutes after. Both stores are on Aguinaldo Street.

The bombs, improvised explosive devices, exploded at the baggage counters at the entrance of the establishments, police said.

Superintendent Dimacuta Sanggacala, spokesman of the Lanao del Norte police, corrected the earlier report he relayed to INQUIRER.net that six people had been killed, saying that some of those



Bomb victims are treated at a hospital following a couple of explosions Thursday Dec. 18, 2008 in Iligan city in southern Philippines.

whom they thought were dead were seriously hurt.

Sanggacala also the wounded

were being treated at the Sanitarium City Hospital and Dr. Uy City Hospital.

Lieutenant Esteffani Cacho, Western Mindanao spokesperson, said two people were wounded

and an L-300 van was damaged in the explosion at Unicity while two were killed and two others hurt in the second blast at Jerry's Shoppers Plaza.

She added that the Explosive Ordnance Disposal team and the K9 unit of the 403rd Brigade had been deployed to the blast sites.

An Associated Press report quoted Lieutenant Colonel Agane Adriatico, a military spokesman, as saying Muslim rebels were to blame for the attacks.

In an interview 403rd Infantry Brigade chief Colonel Nicanor Dolojan said initial findings indicated the improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were crafted out of mortar rounds, which he described as the "signature" of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Dolojan said the motive of the attack was to "sow terror" in the city and possibly divert the military's focus from offensive operations against MILF units the military has been targeting for attacking civilian communities in central

Mindanao in August.

"We are still trying to evaluate [and] we are still trying to assess [the] situation...what is really their intention. But our [offensive] operation [will] still continue," Dolojan said.

Sanggacala said footage obtained from the closed circuit television cameras (CCTV) of both establishments showed the bombs were planted at the baggage counters by women whose faces were covered with veils.

Sanggacala said although they have not identified the perpetrators, these were "acts of terrorist groups."

He said scene of the crime operatives (SOCO) were searching the area for more victims.

Sporadic clashes between government troops and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, an 11,000-strong rebel group fighting for self-rule in the predominantly Roman Catholic nation's south, erupted in August after the country's top court scrapped a preliminary peace deal. (*INQUIRER.net, Mindanao Bureau, Associated Press*)

Drug trade funding rebs, says PNP chief

MANILA, Philippines—The illegal drugs trade plays a large part in funding the armed campaigns of Maoist guerrillas and Islamic militants in the Philippines, the nation's police chief said Thursday.

"We are faced with the phenomenon of 'narco-terrorism'," police Director-General Jesus Verzosa said in a statement to news agencies.

He cited the "involvement of some domestic threat groups in

the production and trafficking of illegal drugs," including the communist New People's Army (NPA) and the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf.

"It is a fact that some of the largest marijuana plantations we have discovered are maintained by the communist New People's Army in the hinterlands," Verzosa said.

"In some parts of the Southern Philippines, the Abu Sayyaf Group has been known to be-

hind the distribution of Shabu," he said, referring to methamphetamine hydrochloride.

"It cannot be denied that these groups derive revenue from these illicit activities to fund their operations," he said, without elaborating.

The 5,000-member NPA has been waging a 40-year Maoist guerrilla campaign while the Abu Sayyaf has been blamed for some of the country's worst terrorist attacks including bomb-

ings and kidnappings.

Verzosa said the police were concerned by the potential influence of drug money in politics as well as in the corruption of police officers.

"We are committed to running after suspects engaged in the illegal drug trade, including our own personnel who (may be) involved directly or indirectly in trafficking of illegal drugs," he added. (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*)

1 killed after dawn Mass gang fight in Manila

MANILA, Philippines—In spite of tighter police watch during dawn Masses, a fight erupted between two rival gangs in Manila at dawn Thursday, resulting in the death of one.

Police identified the fatality as Lean Manuel, 19, who died on arrival at the University of Santo Tomas hospital from a bullet lodged in his body.

Reports from the homicide section of the Manila Police showed that members of the "Thug of Line" and the "Kot-B" gangs fought on España Boulevard and Dos Castillas Street in Sampaloc at around 5 a.m.

The victim and his friends from the "Thug of Line" had attended a dawn Mass at the UST church and were on their way home when at-

tacked by the rival gang.

Police investigators said the two gangs had previously been involved in several clashes. Both groups had filed complaints against each other before the MPD.

In Caloocan City, another pillbox blast disturbed a dawn Mass Thursday, this time hurting a barangay tanod who was attending the Mass.

Caloocan Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez has urged police and barangay officials securing the area to be more watchful in the light of consecutive pillbox explosions during dawn Masses.

Police identified the blast victim as Russel Conda, 33, a tanod at Barangay 28 in Caloocan, and residing at Block 7, Lot 45, Tawilis St. (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*)

PHILIPPINE BRIEFS

Boat with 7 aboard missing off Antique

MANILA, Philippines—Four Filipinos and three foreigners aboard a motorized boat were reported missing after drifting off the coast of Antique province on Thursday, the Philippine Coast Guard said. A report from the Coast Guard said the seven were aboard the MV Maruja when it drifted southeast of Sibay Island, Caluya, Antique. Commodore William Melad, the Coast Guard commander in Iloilo, said there were reports that the boat had "engine trouble." He said there were three unidentified Spanish nationals and four Filipinos on board. Initial reports from the Coast Guard said the boat was on its way to the popular island resort Boracay from a diving expedition off Caluya Island when it encountered engine trouble. Melad said the divers called a contact in Boracay to rescue

them. The agency sent two rescue boats to search for the banca, but the operation was hampered by rough seas. (*Inquirer.net*)

Cagayan ferry toll 47; 6 still missing

MANILA, Philippines—The death toll from the sinking of a ferry off Cagayan province Sunday evening rose to 47 Friday after another body was recovered in Claveria, a police officer said. At the same time, Senior Inspector Alex delos Santos, chief of police of Ballesteros town, said the bodies are in the early stages of decomposition, making it more difficult to identify more victims. Of the dead, 43 have so far been identified, some of them through personal belongings. "We were able to identify some of them. Some still had their rings and watches on," delos Santos said. Forty-five persons sur-

vived the sinking of the M/V Maejan off Aparrie, while six passengers are still missing, he said. (*Inquirer.net*)

1 dead as rebels attack Davao cell site

MANILA, Philippines—A militiaman was killed and another wounded when alleged New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas attacked a Globe cell site in Davao City Thursday, police reports on Friday said. Reports from the Region 11 police office identified the fatality as Felis Dandoy and the injured as Danny Mailam, both members of the Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit in Barangay (village) Paquibato District. The reports said an undetermined number of rebels stormed the Globe monopoly tower in the village at 10:40 a.m. and fled immediately after. (*INQUIRER.net*)

CARP WATERED DOWN

Outrage follows Congress move

By **LEILA SALAVERRIA, TJ BURGONIO**
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—It was denounced as nothing more than a "betrayal" of a 20-year promise to free farmers from bondage to the soil.

Expressions of outrage followed the swift approval by Congress on Wednesday of a joint resolution extending the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program for another six months but calling for a moratorium on compulsory land acquisition.

"This is a betrayal of the farmers' cause in the guise of serving their interest," said Christian Monsod, former chair of the Commission on Elections and counsel for the farmers' group Task Force Mapalad.

Agrarian reform, Monsod stressed, is the "social justice mandate" of the Constitution. "To do away with the compulsory acquisition and distribution is to change the intent and letter of the Constitution," he said.

"It's not only unconstitutional for not complying with the compulsory distribution of land as mandated by the Constitution, it's also illegal. It's null and void," said Arlene Bag-ao, a lawyer for landless farmers.

Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales said he was saddened by the turn of events on the government's centerpiece program to eradicate poverty and promote social justice.

They acted like traitors
During a homily at a Misa de Gallo and a visit to farmers on

hunger strike outside Congress, Rosales slammed lawmakers who he said were supposed to help the poor but "acted like traitors," ignoring pleas of farmers and prelates.

He said landowners employed lawyers to circumvent the law and reminded lawmakers about the late President Ramon Mag-saysay's declaration that those who have less in life should have more in law.

"They mocked you and treated you like children," Rosales said of the farmers who are demanding the distribution of a sugar hacienda owned by the family of President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband.

"They thought they could fool you," Rosales said. "If the law is harsh to the poor, we will give voice to the poor. Cast this in stone, what you do not wish will not happen."

Congress had been debating the CARP law, enacted in 1988 during the Corazon Aquino presidency, for months even before it expired in June. The program was first extended for six months until the end of this month.

On Tuesday, in a meeting between leaders of the two houses of Congress and Ms Arroyo, an agreement was hammered out to issue another resolution extending the CARP law until June 2009, this time with a caveat that there would be no compulsory acquisition of land, described as the "heart and soul" of the program.

The President certified the resolution for urgent action by the two chambers on Wednesday.

Maharlika – PinoyStyle

Martin at peace with Pops; reunion set

By GERRY PLAZA
INQUIRER.NET

MANILA, Philippines—Martin Nievera admits avoiding former wife Pops Fernandez amid all the controversies that have hounded them, even thinking twice about approaching her in gatherings.

But, as he tells INQUIRER.net in an exclusive interview, this is a thing of the past.

“It’s so funny because there’s a time that I would see Pops there and then I would move away. Oh my God, Pops’ there, should I say hello?,” Martin says “Wala na yun.”

Now, Martin is happy that he has since made peace with Pops, who last year gave revealing interviews about her painful separation from Martin and spoke out against Katrina Ojeda’s alleged “jumping around like monkeys” remark about her children with Martin, Robin and Ram.

What’s even more remarkable is that Martin even spends good bonding time with Pops and her current boyfriend, actor Jomari Yllana.

“Now I could go into a restaurant, see Jom and Pops and sit down with them,” Martin stresses. “Jom and I greet each other with a hug. How many ex-husbands and boyfriends do that?”

“It’s just a nice place were in right now compared to what it was before. We’re more comfortable with our lives, our separate lives,” Martin adds.

Their new friendship is further emphasized through their reunion concert, “Missing You,” which is their first concert stage team-up after a long time. And, guess who’s putting it all together?

er? Jomari himself.

Why does Martin think this reunion with Pops should happen?

“We’re probably the best team that I’ve ever worked with. She’s worked with Regine. She’s worked with Kuh. She’s worked with Zsa Zsa. She’s worked practically with everyone you could think of and so with me. But I think that Pops and Martin, the tandem anyway, the team, even though people want to see us get together because of that ‘uuuuuyyy’ factor, there some people who actually see us as an actual good team, melody and harmony. I think we should not let that slip away,” Martin says.

The Feb. 6 concert at the Big Dome promises to draw Martin and Pops’s legions of fans through the years and present old and new things to the table.

But Martin prefers to stick to the past. “In our production meeting, I was telling (director) Rowell (Santiago) and the rest, we should really go retro. Everyone else is. But they don’t have the license to go retro. We do. Because we really are retro—the whole Martin and Pops era is retro. It’s very eighties. It’s very fashionable in the eighties to be a love team. We have the license to do that.”

But in the end the decision was for the concert to offer a mix of old and new songs in the repertoire.

“So I want to do a lot of retro, but the rest, sina Pops, Jom, Rowell said let’s do something new naman. Let’s do something different. I think the audience can really expect a good line up of songs but it will be a mixture of both, the old and the new,” Martin says.

Lea topbills ‘Cinderella’ in Bangkok

By NOEL ADLAI O. VELASCO
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BANGKOK, Thailand—For protest-weary Thais, the staging here of “Rodgers & Hammerstein’s Cinderella,” topbilled by multi-awarded Filipino artist Lea Salonga, offers a brief respite from the political turbulence dividing the nation.

On Tuesday night, everything seemed to have been forgotten as they watched the stirring performance of the Tony Award-winning actress for the first time. The gala premier kicked off the Bangkok leg of the musical’s Asian tour, which started in the Philippines in late July.

For a largely non-English speaking people, the Thais’ reaction to the dialogues and scenes were surprising. They laughed heartily at the jokes even though the lines were obviously of the American brand of humor.

Salonga plays the rags-to-riches heroine in the stage adaptation of the world’s best-loved fairy tale, the most popular version of which was written by Charles Perrault and published in 1697 in Paris. The original version is believed to have come from China in 800 B.C.

Through the skillful injection of modern-day terms into the new Cinderella script, such as interest rates and secret service, the producers were able to make the musical more relevant to the times.

The theatrical effects were superb and magical, leaving the

audience wondering how they were done. The most applauded sequence was when the fairy godmother, wielding her magic wand, transformed the pumpkin into a golden carriage, the mouse into horses.

The scene where Cinderella’s tattered clothes changed into a gown in less than a minute particularly left the audience dumbfounded.

Later, her gown gradually transformed back into rags as she fled the castle at the stroke of midnight. To achieve this effect, three “Leas” were used during the swift costume change, leaving the audience wondering who of the three was the real Lea.

Viewers familiar with the original tale will notice a little twist in the ending. Traditionally, the story ends with the herald and the duke going to Cinderella’s house to see if the shoe fits, all in the presence of her stepsisters.

In the musical, however, Cinderella goes back to the palace garden where she and the prince fell in love, and this is where she tries the shoe on.

At the end of the show, the mostly Thai audience—which included movie stars and VIPs in the entertainment industry—lavished Lea and cast with rousing applause. Filipino expatriates gave the cast a standing ovation.

The supporting players got their own shower of adulation, particularly those who played Cinderella’s stepmother and two stepsisters for their amusing dialogue and antics, the fairy



Lea Salonga plays the title role in *Cinderella*, with Australian actor Peter Saide as the prince

godmother for her “magic” and wit, and the king and queen for their comic asides.

Thai commercial model, singer and stage actress Suthasinee Buddhinarodrigues was particularly ecstatic that she was finally able to see Lea perform live.

“I love Lea Salonga. She’s my idol,” said Suthasinee, who has also starred in Thai musicals herself. “Every song that she sang, I was touched by it. I like a lot of them, particularly ‘There’s Music in You,’ ‘Ten Minutes Ago,’ and ‘Impossible.’”

Suthasinee said she found the musical well written, the dialogues very amusing. “Everything was great” that she wanted to watch it all over again.

Philippine Ambassador to Thailand Antonio Rodriguez said Lea’s performance was “befitting of a star of her stature.”

Billed as the biggest musical production of Broadway Asia

Entertainment (BAE), Cinderella made its Bangkok debut on Dec. 16 and will run until Dec. 21 at the 1,500-seater Muang Thai Rachadalai theater. Ticket prices range from Bt1,000 to Bt4,000.

The Asian tour of the Emmy award-winning classic, which began its 30-week run at the Cultural Center of the Philippines in Manila on July 29, has since taken Lea and company to Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong.

Cinderella will hit Singapore from Jan. 2 to 22, 2009, at the Esplanade; Malaysia from Jan. 30 to Feb. 8 at the Istana Budaya, Kuala Lumpur; and later Japan and Korea.

Cinderella is directed by two-time Aliw Awards winner Bobby Garcia, who was also the director of Disney’s Beauty and the Beast and the acclaimed BAE production of The King And I.

PERSONAL FINANCE

Buying a house amidst a crisis

By MA. SALVE DUPLITO
INQUIRER.NET

The way the chips are falling, the real estate industry may soon become a buyer’s market. Developers will be running after every prospective sale with all they’ve got as the market shrinks. When people are scared, they hoard cash and try to postpone big purchases. It will take a lot of coaxing and attractive sales strategies to make them part with their money—and that’s good for any buyer.

There’s one thing that’s fueling hope among developers: in the Philippines, there’s a huge, pent-up demand for houses—not for speculation or flipping—but for people to live in. The housing backlog from Luzon to Mindanao runs up to millions.

“We all know that one of the Filipino’s priority, especially those who are working overseas, and this has been borne by many research, is to buy a

home,” says David L. Rafael, general manager of AyalaLand International Sales.

But since real estate is perhaps the biggest purchase any person can make in his entire lifetime, buying a house needs careful thought and good research especially when the world is still in the throes of a recession. First-time homebuyers, in particular, need to look at their whole personal financial picture and not be carried away when they “fall in love” with a property.

“Buying a home ranks up there with the decision on who to marry. Your spouse will die but your property will not,” joked Rafael. So, remember the following tips to make sure you’re not stuck with a mistake:

1. Buy a house you can afford.

It sounds almost elementary, but a lot of first-time homebuyers end up being house poor

because they fall in love with a property they cannot afford to buy. The rule of thumb is for homebuyers not to spend more than 28 percent of their monthly income on mortgage payments. Go higher than that and you run the risk of neglecting other financial goals like saving up for education and retirement. So even before you go scouting for a home you can call your own, set a realistic budget. Then look around the neighborhood so that you can compare the price of the house you are buying with the going rate.

2. Carefully consider location.

Your home’s value is greatly affected by where it is built. Protect the money that you plunk in by doing extensive research about the area around it, the ease of transportation, and nearby developments (is the government planning to build a highway nearby or will there

be a mall development soon?). Make it your business to know whether there are squatter communities nearby or ones that are likely to grow in the years to come. Find out how much it costs to drive and commute to work or school every day, including toll fees.

3. Buy directly from the developer or the owner.

If possible, be a direct buyer so you can ask for a bigger discount. However, be prepared to take care of documentary requirements and the process of checking the authenticity of the title, tax payments, among others. The process of buying a home can be quite complicated, but, as always, convenience comes at a high cost.

4. Double-check a developer’s track record.

During the 1997 crisis, a lot of people were burned when developers who were hit by the double whammy of the sudden peso depreciation and huge

dollar-denominated debt. Many homebuyers ended up holding titles to properties worth nothing especially since most were sold at a discount before the project was completed.

“It is easy to make a promise but the hard part is keeping that promise. The only proof that you have is the track record of that company,” says Francisco Ma. D. Roxas, head of operations and marketing at Ayala Land International Sales.

Roxas says the track record will prove if the developer can deliver on the advertised quality of the property at the date committed, enforce deed restrictions like building only on a certain portion of the lot so that the community doesn’t look cramped and not allowing sari-sari stores to be built in every corner. Quality of infrastructure like sewerage and water systems should also be major considerations when buying a home.

5. Set aside money for remodeling, new furniture and home

maintenance.

The drain on your savings doesn’t end when you pay down payment and set aside the budget for monthly mortgage payments. Be prepared and create a budget for new furnishings and maintenance especially if you are not buying a new home. If you plan to keep the expenses at a minimum, take your time to refurnish your dream home so you can stretch out the expenses. Living in a house with a living room set that doesn’t match is less important than keeping your emergency fund at a healthy level.

Many things compete for our attention when it comes to making hard-earned cash grow—franchise business, stock market investments, currencies, among others. Real estate, while hard to liquidate at a moment’s notice, is safer because it “never loses all its value,” say Roxas and Rafael.

For more personal finance articles, visit [INQUIRER.net’s MoneySmarts](http://blogs.inquirer.net/moneysmarts) at <http://blogs.inquirer.net/moneysmarts>.

Maharlika – Opinion

Rediscovering rage

Finally, this country has rediscovered rage. Or at least it has begun to.

Last Friday's rally wasn't as big as the interfaith one last February, but it was a lot angrier. An anger made all the more thunderous and luminous for being expressed in the wondrous colors of Christmas, in the vibrant tones of song and dance, in the barbed-wired words of parody and satire. Some of those who spoke there expressed their anger as well completely literally, in the language of curse and expostulation. One who did so was a pretty unlikely candidate for it.

"*P—ng ina. Patayin na ang Gloria Forever Cha-cha na ito!*" ("Son [or daughter] of a whatever! Let's kill this Gloria Forever Cha-cha once and for all!") That did not come from Rafael Mariano, that did not come from Harry Roque, that did not come from the many women (yes, women) I have heard utter the expletive every time GMA gets mentioned. That came from Mar Roxas. Later, he would tell his listeners he was sorry but "I don't want this day to pass without GMA knowing what we feel."

He didn't need to apologize. That is by far the most eloquent line he has uttered yet. Nothing he has said during the various Senate hearings comes close to it in blissful resonance. Because like Cory saying the things she said during Marcos' time in the quietest of tones, his sudden outburst captured perfectly the emotions bursting out of the hearts of a people who have had to endure the unendurable. In Cory's time, the line that said it best was, "*Tama na, sobra na, palitan na!*" Today, the line that says it best is the same thing, but prefaced by the expletive.

There are limits to politeness. Those limits are breached when you are being impolitely screwed.

Last Friday's rally wasn't as big as the interfaith one last February, but it was a lot more varied. The one in February was interfaith in the religious sense while the one last Friday was interfaith in the secular sense. Or the one in February was interfaith while the one last Friday

was inter-ideological. If indeed we might call the beliefs some carried with them to the rally ideological. But, as in Cory's time where the red flags mingled with the yellow ones, flags of all colors waved at Ayala last Friday. The Left, Right and Middle were there. Businessmen walked with urban poor, politicians talked with plebeians, "presidentiables" linked arms with untouchables.

I had thought the internecine rivalries of the "presidentiables" could only strengthen GMA, allowing her to divide and rule. Or giving her to say like Napoleon, "Never interrupt when your enemy is making a mistake." I had thought that their efforts to bring one another down to get ahead in 2010 could only give GMA the context with which to posture that she was beyond politics and therefore the best person to steer the country through the global economic crisis. A useful tack in trying to stay on.

I hadn't counted on the same thing that fueled that internecine rivalry, which was personal ambition, driving the "presidentiables" to close ranks when their very "presidentiability" was threatened. What can one say? Hell hath no fury than a "presidentiable" scorned. Or about to be so.

Far more importantly, I had thought there was no stoking the Filipino to rage anymore, and was proven wrong. Last Friday showed that Rizal's famous proposition remains true: There is a point when the indio rises from abject prostration and rebels at his oppressor, that point being reached when insult is added to injury, when in addition to being reduced to a slave, he is treated like a fool. The Filipino had let pass the killing of the impeachment bids; he had let pass the NBN, the euro generals and Joc-Joc Bolante; he had let pass an unelected president serving two terms. For that unelected president to want more, for her to want to rule forever, ah, but Mar Roxas found the words to express the violent emotions that spewed in their hearts.

F word, pu___ in_, and the profanity-in-chief

Sen. Mar Roxas can take comfort from a three-decade-old ruling of the US Supreme Court, which has been cited favorably by our own high court: "Surely the State has no right to cleanse public debate to the point where it is grammatically palatable to the most squeamish among us. For, while the [F word] is perhaps more distasteful than most others of its genre, it is nevertheless often true that one man's vulgarity is another's lyric." The senator is right to stand fast, and to say so boldly in a privilege speech at the Senate.

[Read related stories: Rage vs Arroyo, Charter change; Roxas won't apologize for outburst]

In Cohen vs California, a man had worn a jacket emblazoned with the words, "F--- the draft," "as a means of informing the public of the depth of his feelings against the Vietnam War." He was arrested for disturbing the peace "by offensive conduct." In that decision, the US high court broke with established doctrine and held that the F word was protected speech.

The general rule is that "personally abusive epithets," expletives and profanities lie outside the protection of the freedom of speech. The First Amendment is a product of the Enlightenment; it protects mainly speech that contributes to the robust debate indispensable to the functioning of a democracy. It protects ideas, and "effing" ain't no idea at all. "Fighting words" flow straight from the gut, without making a detour through the mind. It is instinctive, not cognitive, or in the words of the dissenters in the US case, they are "mainly conduct and little speech."

That facile distinction was rejected by the majority. Sure, the court said, words serve a dual function: to convey "ideas capable of relatively precise, detached explication" but likewise to vent "otherwise inexpressible emotions." And indeed, "words are often chosen as much for their emotive as their cognitive force [and sometimes] that emotive function [may] practically ... be the more important element of the overall message sought to be communicated." That is why "[w]holly neutral futilities ... come under the protection of free speech as fully as do Keats' poems or Donne's sermons."

I'm sure there are those who will split hairs over this decision. One, they will say that in our case, there is no attempt to censor and punish, but merely to chastise—and to which I reply: Yes, indeed, in Mar's case, we won't jail him. We'll merely burn him at the stake. Two, they will say that we must exact higher standards of democracy's elected deputies, who speak from the podium rather than through jackets or bumper stickers—and to which the senator can reply: That is precisely why I had to express the people's disgust as faithfully as possible.

Others would agree with the substance of his position—they are aghast at the attempt to amend the Constitution to enable the President

More than any other issue, Cha-cha has almost overnight generated widespread and frenetic resistance. Even Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales, Cardinal Ricardo Vidal, Mike Velarde and Noli de Castro, erstwhile GMA supporters, have spoken out against it, or at least against Con-ass. That is the one thing that has united the people, not Manny Pacquiao. Or not Manny Pacquiao alone.

I had thought too that the return of the native, Pacquiao, would cause us to forget everything amid the euphoric sensation of collective redemption and allow Malacañang to drown out all voices with its hosannas and call to scorn divisions and unite behind the conquering hero. Well, the people did line up the streets of Metro Manila to cheer on the new title-holder, but they also welled up in the square of Ayala to jeer the old title-clinger.

The two are not mutually exclusive, the two are not antithetical. Pacquiao would be making a big mistake—like the one he made when he ran for congressman—if he endorses Cha-cha. Filipinos do give unto boxing what is boxing's, but to self-preser-

vation what is self-preservation's.

Arguably, last Friday's rally consisted more of "organized elements" rather than the spontaneous masa. But it was a good start. If you build it, they will come. It augurs well for more and bigger rallies next year. Cha-cha won't go away, and neither will those opposing it. When an irresistible force meets an immovable object, well, in this case the irresistible force should prove, like Oscar de la Hoya, completely resistible.

Who knows? Cha-cha may be for 2009 what Marcos' reelection was for 1970: It may usher in a new First Quarter Storm.

Last Friday's rally did show one thing: The Filipino people can unite behind a conquering hero, but they can just as easily unite against a conquering heel.

Why the urge to drain the discourse of all feeling, and to distill only the purest of ideas divorced from passion? For goodness' sake, why attend a rally if you wanted the purity of thought without the inevitable sweat and dirt of action? But come to think of it—that's exactly what the Palace wants. A grand debate, all for naught, while they plot and steal under cover of darkness. Make that, under cover of executive privilege, of Executive Order 464, of presidential immunity, of every possible legal maneuver to conceal rather than reveal.

Would the epithet have mattered less had the utterer been less urbane and suave than the pedigreed Mar Roxas? Or would we have been loss perturbed had he cussed in English rather than in saltier and more pungent Filipino? If you answered yes to either question, you may have just confessed to a tinge of class bias. Here I find the defensiveness of the "petty burgis" in its unrelenting struggle for bourgeois respectability. Or conversely, perhaps those who concur with Mar's now famous "outburst" just aren't the guys who write or get interviewed—yes, perhaps they are the guys who have been numbed after a lifetime of receiving high society's p—ñ—as? I imagine that the educated Filipino would in fact find an occasional English-language expletive more civilized than, God forbid, the plebeian "P ... L!"

What is more unholy than Press Secretary Jesus Dureza leading the Cabinet in prayer, imploring God to help President Arroyo lead the nation "even beyond 2010" when her term ends under the Constitution? And Dureza has the gall to say that by using such "crass language," Roxas has "stooped so low"? You mean, lower than you, Mr. Dureza? "All that is holy shall be profaned," Karl Marx said in the Communist Manifesto, and today the truly profane in Malacañang have declared themselves holier-than-Mar.

And finally, who would you believe? A Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, with eyes contrite and melancholy, saying, "I-am-sorry"? Or a Mar Roxas boldly saying "I am not sorry"?

EDITORIAL

'Control of corruption'

A week ago, the Millennium Challenge Corp. administered to the Philippine government what can only be described as a slap in the face. After announcing that Indonesia, Colombia and Zambia had qualified for large-scale, five-year development aid called "compacts" from the MCC, a US government agency, the MCC chief executive officer, Ambassador John Danilovich, mentioned the Philippines, which became compact-eligible last March, as a special case. "The [MCC] board agreed that the Philippines remains eligible for developing a compact proposal, but emphasized that MCC will not sign a compact until the country passes the indicator criteria on corruption. The board called upon the government of the Philippines to intensify its efforts to fight corruption and will closely monitor the country's performance," said Danilovich.

A day after the report came out, an incensed "Palace exec" told another newspaper that the US government had no right to lecture the Philippines on good governance. At another time, in another context, the official's argument might have made sense, but in this particular instance the expostulating executive was only being desperately defensive.

"How can they lecture us on good governance when due to their sloppy regulatory work, the financial markets collapsed, requiring \$4 trillion in bailout money and triggering a global economic slowdown?" the Palace official asked.

The blunt answer is: Because it's their money. When the Philippines signed up for the MCC program, the criteria were clear. Each country would be scored on a total of 17 categories, grouped into three main areas of concern: Ruling Justly, Investing in People, and Economic Freedom. When the Philippines was declared compact-eligible last March, did the Palace executive complain about the Americans' lack of competence in determining which criteria will be used to select which countries?

The latest Philippine scorecard (for "FY2009") shows the country failing in three of the 17 categories: in Health Expenditures, in Primary Education Expenditures, and—most controversially, at least for Malacañang—in Control of Corruption.

The official, hiding firmly behind the skirt of anonymity, also asked: "How can they speak of transparency when the very lack of it caused the collapse of Wall Street icons, including two public housing mortgage agencies?"

Again, there is much to be said for questioning the competence of the Bush administration (which founded the MCC in 2004). But in the context of the Arroyo administration's ardent pursuit of the MCC's seal of good housekeeping, the official's remarks are not only in bad taste, they evince extreme bad faith.

Maharlika – Samu't Sari



REY BELGADO

The winners of the singing carol contest pose for a picture after being declared the winner during the Century Insurance Corp. Christmas party held at Club V on Dec. 16, 2008.



REY BELGADO

Staff of Century Insurance Corp. watch the performances on stage during the Christmas party held at the Saipan Grand Hotel's Club V on Dec. 16, 2008.



REY BELGADO

Century Insurance Corp. staff and members of the Tan Holdings Corp. accounting department pose for a picture during the Christmas party held at the Saipan Grand Hotel's Club V on Dec. 16, 2008.



REY BELGADO

RMS, IT and Accounting Department staff pose for a picture during the Century Insurance Corp. Christmas party held at the Saipan Grand Hotel's Club V on Dec. 16, 2008.



SINGING ACCOUNTANTS

MIFICPA (Marianas Institute of Filipino CPAs and Accountants) members visited the homes of Nel Matanguihan and Mr. and Mrs. Ritz Villalor recently for their Christmas Carol fundraising event.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



NEW NURSES

KRISTI EATON

University of Loyola at CNM president/CEO Dr. Johnny Y. Fong gives the opening remarks at the commencement ceremony for the university's new nursing graduates held Thursday at the PIC's Charley's Cabaret.



KRISTI EATON

The 11 University of Loyola graduates watch and listen as Gov. Benigno Fitial gives the keynote address.



MATH COURT WINNERS

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The winners of the Grace Christian Academy's K-2 division pose for a picture after a successful participation in the Math Court competition held Dec. 13, 2008 at Koblerville Elementary School and Saipan Southern High School.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Grace Christian Academy's winners in the 3-5 division of the Math Court competition pose for a picture after reaping many awards at the contest, held Dec. 13, 2008 at Koblerville Elementary School and Saipan Southern High School.

Youngstyle

How intelligence is measured

By VALERIE STRAUSS
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Pretend for a minute that:

- The kid who sits on your right at school is a whiz at math.
- The kid on your left is bad at math but writes great stories.
- Then there's you. You are just OK at math and writing but are very talented at dancing.

Whom would you consider to be the smartest? Why?

The subject of intelligence is one that human beings have wrestled with since ancient times.

Yet today there is still no single definition of what it means to be intelligent. Experts on the subject don't agree on whether there is one kind of "intelligence" or lots of different ones.

Over the years there have been different tests created that are supposed to measure intelligence.

But no single test really can tell, experts say.

Intelligence Fact

(c) 2008, The Washington Post

In addition to humans, experts say that the smartest animals are great apes (including chimpanzees and gorillas), dolphins and whales, parrots, elephants, dogs and cats.

The earliest test was done by a French scientist named Alfred Binet in 1905. Binet was trying to fix a situation in which kids who were not mentally retarded were being placed into class with kids who were. His test included tasks such

as vocabulary questions and solving specific problems.

Over time other tests were developed that resulted in a score known as an "intelligence quotient," or IQ.

It used to be calculated this way: Take a person's "mental age" (as decided by a test score), then divide it by their actual age and multiply by 100.

So if a 10-year-old tested out as a 12-year-old, the IQ would be 12 divided by 10 times 100. IQ: 120.

Today nobody uses mental age. Now a test is given with tasks involving short-term memory, reasoning, analyzing and the recall of facts. The score is then compared with the scores of other people the same age, and an IQ is assigned.

IQ scores can change over time, and they are affected by where and how you live. Also, the tests don't measure such things as creativity and leadership skills.

The average IQ is 100, experts say. One of the most popular modern theories was created by Harvard University Professor Howard Gardner. His theory of multiple intelligences says that there are a lot of different ways of being smart.

They include being really good at music or with words and language. Gardner even thinks there is a "kinesthetic" intelligence, referring to people who can control their bodies, such as dancers and mimes.

Critics of the theory say those are just traits, or qualities that people possess, not intelligences. What do you think?

In the end, experts say, the smartest people are probably not those who can simply ace a test. The most intelligent are those who can understand the world around them, make changes to adapt to it and respond

in a sensible way.

Sources: "The Handy Anatomy

Answer Book" by Naomi E. Balaban and James E. Bobick, Visible Ink Press; www.howardgardner.com.

Baseball's hot stove league is heating up

By FRED BOWEN
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

Bowen writes sports novels for kids.

WASHINGTON—There's a baseball league where no games are played. But every year this league helps determine who will be the World Series champion.

It's called the hot stove league. It's the time during the offseason when teams make trades and players sign with new teams.

How did the hot stove league get its name? Years ago folks heated their homes with big potbellied stoves and baseball was the most popular sport. Fans would gather around the warm stove during the cold months and talk baseball.

Things are heating up. Let's talk about the big news from this year's hot stove league.

Mark Teixeira: The Los Angeles Angels first baseman is this winter's big prize. Several teams, including the Washington Nationals and the Baltimore Orioles, are trying to sign the free agent slugger.

Is Teixeira worth it? He is young (28 years old) and a consistent hitter who has averaged more than 30 home runs and 100 runs batted in (RBI) during his six-year career. So Teixeira would greatly improve any team, especially a team like the Nats, which lost 102 games last season.

But signing one player for lots of money is always a big gamble. Just ask the Washington Wizards. They signed Gilbert Arenas to a big con-

tract. Arenas got hurt, and now the Wizards are one of the worst teams in pro basketball.

The Yankees: The Yanks are always big news in the hot stove league. This year they have signed frontline starting pitchers CC Sabathia and A.J. Burnett.

The risk in signing pitchers is that pitchers get hurt. At 6 feet 7 and almost 300 pounds, Sabathia looks indestructible. He has averaged more than 30 starts every year and has never been seriously hurt. Burnett, on the other hand, has had a history of arm problems. If they stay healthy, Sabathia and Burnett should help the Yanks get back in the playoffs.

K-Rod: The most important free agent signing so far this winter may be the New York Mets getting the Los Angeles Angels' ace reliever, Francisco "K-Rod" Rodriguez. The Mets bullpen was terrible last season, allowing opponents to come back and win 29 games. Rodriguez, who had a major league-leading 62 saves in 2008, should put an end to that nonsense.

Tampa Bay Rays: One team that is not trying to sign any expensive, big-name free agents during the hot stove league is last season's surprise American League champs. The Rays have been winning with a formula of finding good, young players and letting them play.

Maybe the best way for a team to play the hot stove league is not to play at all. You might get burned.



What's really up your nose?

(c) 2008, The Washington Post

Since the cold and flu season is upon us, KidsPost asked our expert on all things gross, Washington pediatrician Howard Bennett, to give us his views on the inner workings of the nose.

He's writing a book called "The (Gross) Facts of Life," so he had interesting things to tell us about nasal mucus, the grown-up word for snot.

The nose is a wonderful part of your body. The outside can be as cute as a button, and the inside, though gross to look at, does some very important jobs. Whenever you catch a cold, there is a war going on in your nose and sinuses. In the first few days, the virus holds your cells hostage and uses them to make more viruses.

While this is going on, the sinus

area gets swollen and clear mucus drips out of your nose. Depending on your age, this mucus will end up on your shirt sleeve, in a tissue or on someone else's shoulder. If you're old enough to read this article, your mucus should definitely end up in a tissue!

In addition to a runny nose, cold sufferers commonly have one or more of the following symptoms: scratchy throat, headache, cough and fever.

After you have had a cold for a day or so, an army of white blood cells moves

into the area and starts killing the viruses that had the nerve to attack you.

In the battles that follow, dead viruses and white blood cells mix with the clear mucus, and—presto!—you now have yellow (or green) goop dripping out of your head. In most cases, a cold lasts from three to 10 days until all the invaders have been destroyed and you emerge, cold-free, from the battlefield.

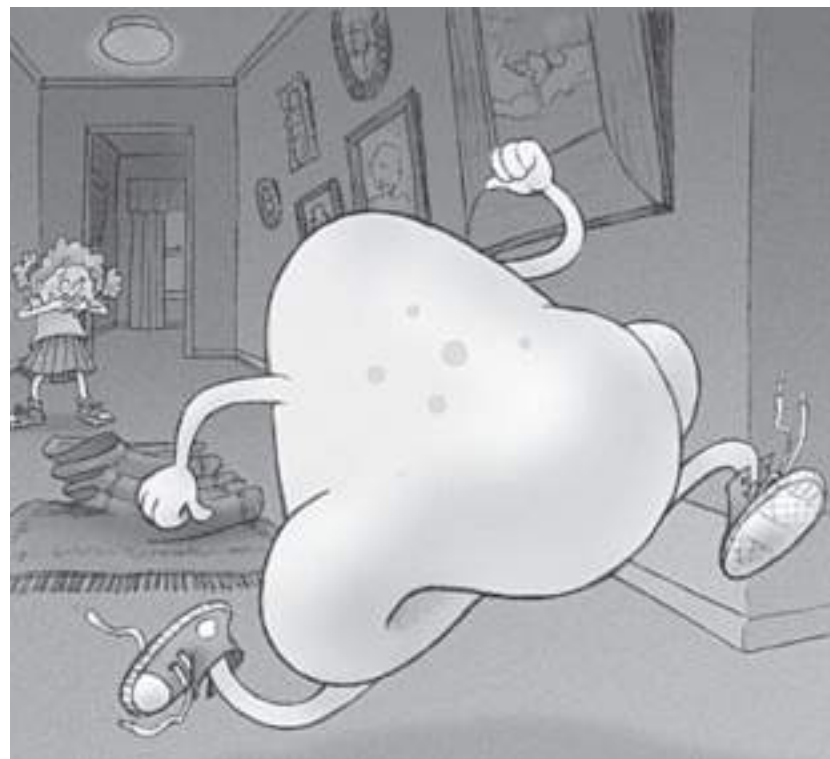
Here are smart things you can do to help prevent getting colds:

- Wash your hands often during the day, especially before you eat.
- Get plenty of exercise, which helps your body fight infections.
- Eat well so your body has the nutrients it needs to stay healthy.
- Share gross facts and stories with your parents and teachers (just kidding).

Know your nose

(c) 2008, The Washington Post

The human nose has special parts called receptors that help your brain recognize about 10,000 smells.





NOT NECESSARILY SO! Hidden in the above frame is a famous old saying. You can find it by reading every other letter as you go around it clockwise. The trick is finding the right first letter.

Answer: Starting with the first 'G' in the top left, 'Good fences make good neighbors.'

A "POP" QUIZ! Students, you have one minute to find out why these four words are like bad computer programs. The clock is running.

Answer: They're like bad computer programs because they all contain "BUGS." 1. Loose, 2. Tie, 3. Ant, 4. Gnat.

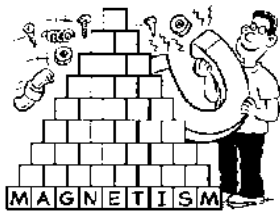
DON'T GET "WILD" TRYING TO SOLVE THIS ONE! At right is a word square. Can you find the four five-letter words that match the definitions below? All words used must read the same both across and down.

1. To be confined (in place).
2. A dwelling place.
3. To stuff with food.
4. A finished lawn.
5. Sealed documents.

Answers: 1. Caged, 2. Abode, 3. Gorge, 4. Edged, 5. Ureals.



THE PYRAMID OF WORD POWER!



Starting with **MAGNETISM**, the given word at the bottom of our word pyramid, try dropping one letter at a time as you work your way up, so that the remaining letters at each level spell out a new word. The following helpful hints are in ascending order, beginning with **MAGNETISM**.

1. The power to attract (given).
2. To become very angry.
3. The act of making fun of.
4. Found in fairy tales.
5. Small, biting insects.
6. A pull or tear in fabric.
7. The Tower of Pisa, for example.
8. To the same extent or degree.
9. Highest quality.

Answers: (from the bottom up) Magnetism, steaming, heaving, giant, gnats, snag, sag, as, a.

Strange BUT TRUE

By Samantha Weaver

■ It was Canadian-American economist John Kenneth Galbraith who made the following sage observation—which seems more and more prescient every day lately: “The only function of economic forecasting is to make astrology look respectable.”

■ In 2004, celebrities Paris Hilton and Ludacris appeared in a “Vote or Die” advertising campaign designed to encourage young people to participate in the electoral process. It’s interesting to note, however, that they themselves didn’t register to vote in that election.

■ In The Old Granary Burying Ground, a cemetery in Boston, the grave of Mother Goose is more popular with visitors than the graves of American patriots Paul Revere, Samuel Adams and John Hancock.

■ Studies show that the only taste humans are born with a craving for is sugar.

■ According to a national poll, the average teenage boy spends more on getting ready for the prom than the average teenage girl: \$545 versus \$530.

■ The saguaro cactus, found mainly in America’s Southwest and in Mexico, can live for more than 150 years. It only grows about 1 inch in the first 10 years of its life, but can eventually reach a height of 50 feet.

■ You may not realize it, but you’re almost certainly quite proficient at dactylonomy—counting on your fingers. If you’re deaf, you’re probably good at dactylology—communicating by using signs made with your fingers.

■ With the holiday season approaching, you might want to remember to check the policies of the stores whose gift cards you receive. In 2006, the electronics chain Best Buy made \$43 million off gift cards that were not used before they expired. In the United States, an estimated \$5 billion in gift-card cash expires every year.

Thought for the Day: “A committee is a cul-de-sac down which ideas are lured and then quietly strangled.”—Sir Barnett Cocks

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MAGIC MAZE • EVEN —

K Q N K I I D A T X U R P M J G
D A X V S Q E N K S I F D A X
V K T Q T M O M D T J H F C A
Y W A L P U U D R E P N L J H
F D R E Y B O Z X P V T R Q O
M K R E R O C S E H T S D I H
F E N K B B S H G E O E D B Z
D O Y W V M E E A N D T R Q O
M N L K I H U C G N I C A P S
F D C A Z X W N A A C H V U S
R Q O H G U O H T P P E T N M

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

Break	Money	Pages	The score
Chance	Number	Song	Things out
Handed	Odds	Spacing	Though
Keel	Pace	Stephen	

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GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

DIFFICULTY: ★

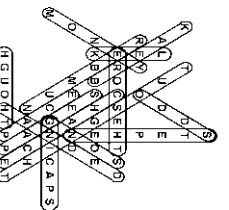
★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
★★★ GO FIGURE!

	-		x		25
x		+		+	
	+		+		18
-		x		x	
	x		-		5
27		11		27	

1 2 3 4 5 5 7 8 9

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MAGIC MAZE ANSWER



EVEN

GO FIGURE ANSWER

27	11	27			
5	8	1	x	5	
x	x				
18	+	6	+	x	x
	+		+		
25	x	2	-	7	

Was mom guilty of cruelty?

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I need to comment on a letter by a mom who let her children be responsible for two Betta fish that they let die. Children should never be responsible for any animal! It's the parents' responsibility to care for them. Why should the animal suffer? It's fine to learn by example, but the parent is the one who should care for the animal. This woman is guilty of animal cruelty in letting these fish suffer and die. An animal is not a toy. People like this woman don't deserve the companionship of any animal!—Tina V., PETA member

DEAR TINA: I can appreciate your point of view, and I'm sure that none of my readers condone the suffering of any pet. I think that you missed the point of that letter: the mother refusing to let the kids have another pet after they let their Betta fish die due to neglect.

Part of growing up is learning responsibility, and learning the consequences of failing to take responsibility. The consequences of failing to take care of their Betta fish was that they could not have another pet.

Could the mother have stepped in and taken care of the fish? Possibly. I don't know all the circumstances, and the sad fact is that small fish can go downhill very fast when signs of dis-



stress are missed. But she gave those kids responsibility and gave them her trust to care for those fish. This is a very important part of child-rearing. You cannot wrap your kids in cotton until they're 18; they need to learn certain things if they're to be at all useful.

Learning to care for another living creature is one of the most important lessons in a child's life, and I'm not going to stand in judgment of a mother trying to teach that lesson.

■ ■ ■

Send your tips, questions and comments to Paws Corner, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or e-mail them to pawscorner@hotmail.com.

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Celebrate the season with winter lights

Candles glow this month on our advent wreath, on my husband's birthday cake and on our front porch to welcome guests throughout the holiday season. Different occasions, different meanings, but the candles are universal. There's something about that small circle of light that has drawn people together since the beginning of time. So no matter what you're celebrating this holiday season, light a candle and let its gentle flicker draw you closer to the people and community you love.

Floating Votives

Fill a tall, clear vase one-third full with fresh cranberries. Add water and a candle floating on top near the rim.

Candles in a Jar

Pour 1 cup of sand into a clear, glass canning or jam jar and nestle a votive candle in the sand. Make several for an eye-catching display.

Outdoor Ice Candles

Fill a balloon with water until it is the size of a softball. Blow once into the balloon and tie a knot. Place in a plastic bowl or deli container and set in the freezer for about 6 hours. Once a thick shell of ice has formed inside the balloon but you still hear some water sloshing inside the shell, pop the balloon and discard it properly. Pour the excess water out to leave a cavity in the middle where a votive candle will later be placed. Re-freeze.



At sunset, remove from freezer, place a votive candle in the cavity and light it outside. It will sparkle like crystal!

If you make the ice candles in an area where the temperature is above freezing the next day, store it in your freezer.

Indoor Ice Candles

Fill a decorative bowl with snow or chipped ice. Set the ice candle in the middle of the ice, and light for a centerpiece on a buffet table.

Safety note: An adult should always be present when burning candles.

■ ■ ■

Donna Erickson's award-winning television series "Donna's Day" airs on public television nationwide. Visit www.donnasday.com to

find out when it airs on your local PBS station and to sign up for Donna's e-newsletter.

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Life & Style

'Doubt' tops SAG pack with 5 nominations

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Catholic school drama "Doubt" led contenders Thursday for the Screen Actors Guild Awards with five nominations, including honors for Meryl Streep, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Amy Adams and Viola Davis.

The late Heath Ledger also earned a supporting-actor nomination, whose maniacal turn as the Joker in "The Dark Knight" has made him an Academy Awards front-runner. The Batman blockbuster also had a nomination for best stunt ensemble.

Streep has a lead-actress nomination, while Hoffman, Adams and Davis are competing in supporting categories for "Doubt," a war-of-wills tale between an old-school nun and a progressive priest.

"Doubt" also has a nomination for overall cast performance, along with the romantic fantasy "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," the Richard Nixon saga "Frost/Nixon," the gay-rights drama "Milk" and the poor-boy-makes-good tale "Slumdog Millionaire."

Kate Winslet grabbed two nominations, best actress for the domestic drama "Revolutionary Road" and supporting actress for the Holocaust-themed story "The Reader."

Other best-actress nominees were:

Anne Hathaway, "Rachel Getting Married"; Angelina Jolie, "Changeling"; and Melissa Leo, "Frozen River."

Nominated for best actor were: Richard Jenkins, "The Visitor"; Frank Langella, "Frost/Nixon"; Sean Penn, "Milk"; Brad Pitt, "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button"; and Mickey Rourke, "The Wrestler."

The 15th annual SAG Awards will air live on TNT and TBS Jan. 25, four weeks before the Academy Awards.

Last January's SAG ceremony took place during a writers' strike that affected other Hollywood honors, including the Golden Globes, which were canceled. The guild awards come amid fresh labor strife, with SAG leaders now threatening a strike as negotiations with producers over a new actors contract have stalled.

A strike-authorization vote sought by SAG President Alan Rosenberg has caused a bitter divide among guild members, with top-name actors taking sides. Actors supporting the strike-authorization vote include Mel Gibson, Holly Hunter and Laura Dern, while Tom Hanks, George Clooney and Cameron Diaz are among those opposed.

While nominees include actors from

both sides, Rosenberg said that on the night of the show, he hopes "we can put all our differences aside and focus on what we have in common rather than what divides us. I don't think there will be a pall over the awards show. It's always a great event of actors celebrating actors."

The SAG picks lined up much the same as last week's nominations for the Golden Globes, the second-biggest Hollywood film honors after the Academy Awards. The most notable snub was Winslet's "Revolutionary Road" co-star Leonardo DiCaprio, who had a Globe nomination for dramatic actor but was overlooked by SAG.

The same thing happened the last time Winslet and DiCaprio starred together. SAG nominations for 1997 included a best-actress slot for Winslet in "Titanic," but DiCaprio was left out of the best-actor lineup.

Oscar nominations that year also excluded DiCaprio, while Winslet earned a spot in the best-actress field.

Joining Adams, Davis and Winslet among supporting-actress picks were Penelope Cruz for "Vicky Cristina Barcelona" and Taraji P. Henson for "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button." Henson also shared in the cast nomi-

nation for "Benjamin Button" and a cast nomination among TV dramas for "Boston Legal."

Besides Ledger and Hoffman,

supporting-actor nominees included Josh Brolin, "Milk"; Robert Downey Jr., "Tropic Thunder"; and Dev Patel, "Slumdog Millionaire."



In this image released by Miramax Film Corp., Meryl Streep portrays Sister Aloysius in a scene from "Doubt."

Police: Suicide try hospitalizes Mindy McCready

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Country singer Mindy McCready was in stable condition in a hospital Thursday after police said she cut her wrists and took several pills in an apparent suicide attempt.

A Nashville police report said McCready's brother discovered the singer in her bloody bed several hours after she returned Wednesday morning from a night out. Timothy McCready told police his sister had been "very intoxicated."

Centennial Medical Center spokeswoman Jenny Barker confirmed McCready's condition. McCready attorney Lee Ofman said he did not have details about the situation. Her last known publicist, New York-based Susan Blond Inc., said Thursday that they no longer represent her.

McCready, 33, had one No. 1 hit, "Guys Do It All the Time," in 1996. Since then, her career has languished as she struggled with legal and personal problems that included previous suicide attempts.

According to the police report, McCready called her mother early Wednesday and told her "she had seen her angel baby." The report did not explain the reference, but it was enough to prompt the mother to call Timothy McCready, 29, who lives with his sister, to check on her.

He told police he found her stumbling in the kitchen but apparently OK. She went back to her room and he went back to his. He went to check on her again after he woke up later that morning and found she had cut her wrists and taken the pills.

"Malinda was not very alert and her bed had blood on it," the report states, using McCready's given first name.

In October, McCready was released from jail in Tennessee after serving about 30 days for violating probation on a 2004 drug charge. She only had to serve about half of her 60-day sentence because of credits she received

for good behavior and doing janitorial work in the jail, the Williamson County Sheriff's Department said.

She was accused in June of falsifying her community service records and charged with violating her probation. McCready received a suspended three-year sentence in 2004 for fraudulently obtaining prescription painkillers.

The country singer has also made headlines because of her relationship with former baseball star Roger Clemens.

According to an interview broadcast in November by the syndicated show "Inside Edition," McCready claimed she broke off her relationship with Clemens when he wouldn't marry her.

McCready, however, was quoted the same day on the Web site of the New York Daily News as saying she didn't want to marry Clemens.



McCready

'Apocalypse Now' actor Sam Bottoms dies in LA

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Sam Bottoms, who had small but memorable roles in the 1970s classics "Apocalypse Now" and "The Last Picture Show," has died. He was 53. Bottoms, one of four actor-brothers, died Tuesday of brain cancer at his home in Los Angeles, wife Laura Bickford said.

In "Apocalypse Now," Francis Ford Coppola's 1979 Vietnam War epic, Bottoms played pro surfer-turned-soldier Lance B.

Johnson, who takes to the waves amid bombs and bullets under the orders of the maniacal, surfing-mad Lt. Col. Bill

Kilgore played by Robert Duvall.

"He was a handsome, tall young man and very sweet-natured and seemed to be right for that part," Coppola said Wednesday. "Sam was a good actor. Of course, he comes from a family that had a lot of theatrical activity."

In his 1971 film debut, a 15-year-old Bottoms starred alongside his best-known brother, Timothy, in "The Last Picture Show," playing a mute and mentally handicapped boy forced by friends to lose his virginity to a prostitute.

Sam Bottoms said he was in Texas

to visit his brother, who was the film's lead, when director Peter Bogdanovich saw him and cast him in the part.

Brothers Joseph and Ben are also actors.

Sam Bottoms was born in Santa Barbara in 1955, the third of four sons of sculptor James "Bud" Bottoms. He began acting in local theater at age 10.

After his 1970s films, Sam Bottoms went on to appear in the Clint Eastwood westerns "The Outlaw Josey Wales" and "Bronco Billy," and Coppola's 1987 Vietnam film "Gardens of Stone."

He more recently appeared in the films "Seabiscuit" and "Shopgirl."



Bottoms

Jeremy Piven leaves Broadway's 'Speed-the-Plow'

NEW YORK (AP)—Two actors—Norbert Leo Butz and William H. Macy—will replace Jeremy Piven who has unexpectedly left the cast of the hit Broadway revival of “Speed-the-Plow,” producer Jeffrey Richards announced Thursday.

Piven, star of HBO’s “Entourage,” abruptly departed the critically praised production of Mamet’s satiric comedy over the weekend, less than two months after the show opened.

“We have been advised by Jeremy Piven’s medical representatives that he is seriously ill and is unable to fulfill his contractual obligation to ‘Speed-the-Plow,’” Richards and the show’s other producers said in a statement. “Consequently, he has left the production 10 weeks early.”

In an interview, Richards said Piven had collapsed Monday at his home and had been under the care of his doctor, Carlon Colker.

The doctor told Variety, the show business trade paper, the 43-year-old actor has been suf-

fering from high levels of mercury. He said the actor had been “a trooper and did everything he could to fight extreme fatigue, among other things, since the condition was diagnosed.”

Butz, a Tony winner for his role in “Dirty Rotten Scoundrels,” will play Piven’s role Dec. 23-Jan. 11, while Macy, a veteran of many Mamet plays including “American Buffalo” and “Oleanna,” takes over for the rest of the limited engagement, Jan. 13-Feb. 22.

“These are our white knights,” Richards said. “It’s about coming and helping a play that has lost a star. We are very fortunate to have two great actors to do the show.”

Richards said Piven had not missed any performances until Tuesday. Piven’s spokeswoman, Samantha Mast, did not return a phone call seeking comment.

Mamet’s three-character play about Hollywood glamour, sex and power also stars Elisabeth Moss and Raul Esparza. Until Butz joins the

cast on Tuesday, Piven’s role of ambitious producer Bobby Gould will be played by understudy Jordan Lage.

“Speed-the-Plow,” directed by Neil Pepe, opened Oct. 23 to enthusiastic notices and has been doing respectable business, grossing upward of \$500,000 a week. The \$2.26 million production was on the verge of recouping its costs before Piven left, Richards said, and still hopes to before the run ends in February.

It has been an up-and-down

fall for Mamet on Broadway. A revival of his “American Buffalo,” featuring John Leguizamo, Cedric the Entertainer and Haley Joel Osment, opened last month to a thumbs-down reception and closed a week later.

The playwright had his own take on Piven’s illness, telling Variety: “I talked to Jeremy on the phone, and he told me that he discovered that he had a very high level of mercury. So my understanding is that he is leaving show business to pursue a career as a thermometer.”



AP
In this Dec. 8, 2008 file photo, actor Jeremy Piven attends a screening of “The Wrestler” in New York.

3 sketches believed to be da Vinci's

PARIS (AP)—Researchers have found three previously unknown sketches on the back of a painting Leonardo da Vinci that may have been drawn by the Renaissance master.

Paris’ Louvre Museum says the sketches feature a horse head, part of a skull and baby Jesus with a lamb. Researchers using infrared cameras found them on the back of “The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne.”

In a statement Thursday, the Louvre said the style was reminiscent of Leonardo’s. Researchers are working to determine whether he drew them.

The sketches are barely visible to the eye. They were discovered during an in-depth examination using an infrared camera that picks up traces of carbon-based pigments often used for sketches.

The painting is in the Louvre’s collection.

ENTERTAINMENT TIDBITS

Brancato jury reports deadlock, resuming Friday

NEW YORK (AP)—The jury hearing the Lillo Brancato second-degree murder case says it’s deadlocked 11-1. Jurors returned home and were expected to resume deliberations Friday. A mistrial was avoided earlier Thursday after it was discovered a juror had been taking notes on testimony and doing research on the case at home. Brancato—who got his big break playing opposite Robert De Niro in the 1993 film “A Bronx Tale” and also is known for playing a wannabe mobster on “The Sopranos”—agreed to a substitution with an alternate juror. His consent was required because the jury had already started deliberating the day before. Jurors had to start over. Prosecutors say Brancato and an accomplice broke into an apartment next to a policeman’s home. When the off-duty officer went to investigate, the accomplice shot him in the heart. Brancato has pleaded not guilty.

Chiklis is creating a drama about investor fraud

NEW YORK (AP)—Michael Chiklis didn’t lose any money in the escalating Bernard Madoff scandal. But he did fall victim to another Ponzi scheme early this year. And now, sadder but wiser, he’s developing a TV series fueled by his experience. Chiklis has been gathering material from others also hurt by investor scams, “and if I had hair, it’d curl,” says the actor, who starred in the recently concluded FX cop drama “The Shield.” Soon he hopes to have a pilot script for “House of Cards.” “There are fascinating characters who perpetrate these schemes,” says Chiklis, more convinced than ever that a drama about such scoundrels and their prey would be relatable to viewers. “The Madoff situation tells me how pervasive these rip-offs have become,” he says. “And there’s more ahead, I’m sure.”

NBC News’ Todd, Guthrie to cover White House

NEW YORK (AP)—NBC News has named Chuck Todd as chief

White House correspondent, with Savannah Guthrie joining him on the beat. Todd also will serve as contributing editor to “Meet the Press,” now hosted by David Gregory, his White House predecessor. Todd will remain NBC News’ political director, his title since joining the network in March 2007. Joining NBC in September 2007, Guthrie has served as White House correspondent for weekend programming, contributing to “NBC Nightly News,” “Today” and MSNBC. From 2004 to 2007, she was the legal affairs correspondent and a national trial correspondent for Court TV.

Paul Simon named to Berklee College of Music board

BOSTON (AP)—Paul Simon and Christopher Guest have been appointed to the board of trustees of Boston’s Berklee College of Music. The school announced the additions on Thursday. Berklee President Roger Brown said adding Simon and Guest augments the board’s knowledge of education, songwriting, performance and film. Both men have received honorary doctorates from Berklee. Simon, a member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, has two scholarships in his name at the college. Guest, who directed the films “Waiting for Guffman,” “Best in Show” and “A Mighty Wind,” performed a concert with Berklee students and faculty in 2007.

Book ‘em: Two Madoff books in the works

NEW YORK (AP)—The Bernard Madoff books are in the works. Less than one week after the former chairman of the Nasdaq Stock Market was arrested for an alleged multibillion dollar Ponzi scheme, publishers HarperCollins and the Random House Publishing Group each announced Thursday that they had signed up books about the scandal. In 2010, HarperCollins will release an investigative work, currently untitled, by reporter-anchor Andrew Kirtzman, who has been featured on the New York television stations WCBS and NY1; Random House will publish a Madoff book, also currently untitled, by Richard Behar, a journalist who has written for Time, Fortune and other magazines.

Couple continues to be family after a dozen years of divorce

By **ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



DEAR ABBY: I have begun dating a woman I find very attractive. I’ll call her “Rita.” We have many things in common, and she’s a lot of fun to be with.

The only thing that troubles me is that after 12 years of being divorced, Rita is still very much involved with her ex. Most of their children are grown. One is a senior in high school, and an older child still lives at home.

Her ex is allowed free access to her home, mostly to see the kids—and comes and goes at will. They travel together to family functions and to visit children who live in other parts of the state.

Rita recently had her hair styled differently and told me she was annoyed that her ex didn’t seem to notice. When he comes to her house to cook for the kids, he leaves the kitchen a mess, which she apparently cleans up.

Do you think Rita has gotten past the divorce? What would you say the odds are of having a successful relationship with her?

DAZED AND CONFUSED IN ST. LOUIS

DEAR DAZED AND CONFUSED: That depends upon what you would consider a “successful relationship.” Apparently, Rita’s divorce was a very amiable one, and the ex is still a part of her and the children’s lives. This can be considered a plus or a minus, depending upon how you feel about a package deal—because it appears that is what you’ll be getting if you become serious about Rita.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have a “pennies from heaven” story you might appreciate. My best friend, “Darrel,” was a smoker who collected quarters. His apartment had two distinguishing features—stacks of quarters and the smell of secondhand smoke. Because we were both busy people, we had seen each other only twice in about a year, but maintained a phone and e-mail friendship.

I had planned a trip out west to spend time with family and had e-mailed him about it. Unbeknownst to me, Darrel had been very ill, and he died the day I sent the e-mail. I learned about it while I was in transit to my destination. There was nothing I could do. I had no way to get to his funeral and no way to say goodbye.

When we reached our hotel—part of a smoke-free chain—my husband and I opened the door to our room and were greeted by a familiar odor. It smelled just like Darrel’s apartment! And when I walked to the dresser to unpack, two quarters were sitting on top. It was then that my husband and I agreed that Darrel had stopped to say goodbye on his way to heaven.

QUARTERS FROM HEAVEN

DEAR QUARTERS: Please accept my sympathy for the loss of your friend. I’m glad you received some comfort in your time of need. However, it’s entirely possible that the guest who occupied the room before you broke the rules and puffed away in a room that was supposed to be nonsmoking. I hope you notified the front desk so you could be switched to other accommodations, and the room could be thoroughly cleaned and deodorized to prevent someone with a sensitivity to smoke from walking in and experiencing a severe allergic reaction.

■ ■ ■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

■ ■ ■

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: “Abby’s Favorite Recipes” and “More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby.” Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$12 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Morse morsel
5 List-end-ing abbr.
9 H look-alike
12 Enrage
13 Incite
14 Answer to the Sphinx's riddle
15 "American —"
16 Excep-tional
17 Sort
18 Marma-lade ingredient
19 Storm center
20 Pruritus
21 Erstwhile acorn
23 Govt. org. in "The Simpsons Movie"
25 Marinated meat in a tortilla
28 Deaden-ing influence
32 Marble type
33 Art store purchase
34 Back-related

DOWN

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37 Sra., across the Pyrenees
38 Mound stal
39 Jupiter's alias
42 Drunkard
44 Mid-May honorees
48 Copper head?
49 Cable-TV sports award
50 Wield a blue pencil
51 Miss Piggy's pronoun
52 Alben Barkley, e.g.
53 Parks of civil rights fame

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John Van Druen play
Hanni-bal's TV squad
Document
Craze
In olden times
Discor-dance
Chart format
"When will it all —?"
Hwy.
Abate
Do a second draft
Door-frame part
Reed instrument
Blood line?
Tourney, often
Blood-hour'd's clue
Atomizer output
Go no farther
Zsa Zsa's sis

Solution time: 27 mins.

Yesterday's answer 12-20

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
12 13 14
15 16 17
18 19 20
21 22 23 24
25 26 27 28 29 30 31
32 33
34 35 36
37 38
39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47
48 49 50
51 52 53
54 55 56

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: David Cook, 26; Nicole de Boer, 38; Uri Geller, 62; Peter Criss, 63

Happy Birthday: Too much, too soon will be your downfall. Time is on your side, so don't spread yourself thin. There is much to be learned this year and organization and the ability to do one thing at a time will lead to your success. Personal matters must not be allowed to interfere with what you want to accomplish. Your numbers are 10, 12, 24, 28, 32, 37, 44

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Do your best to help others. Your kindness will be impressive and your actions can be the base for something you take to higher levels in the new year. Travel and you will see the possibilities. ★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Talk to someone who has experience and you will find a solution to a work-related problem that has been bothering you. Don't let anyone talk you out of what you want to do or let love lead you astray. ★★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Be the one to make the plans to get everyone together. Your high-spirited nature will help you maneuver into a better financial, professional and personal position. It's time to stand up and be counted. ★★★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): It's only money, so don't be stingy this festive season. Setting up a new budget for the new year should help to quiet the storm brewing within. Change is possible if you are willing to adapt. ★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You should be able to talk anyone into anything, so present or propose what you have to offer. An interesting partnership can form if you are innovative, imaginative and fair when working out a deal. ★★★★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Think first and you will avoid a dispute. There is too much at stake for you to let someone pushy alter your plans. Surround yourself with positive people. This is no time to sulk. ★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Everything will be magnified. You will have to keep your emotions in check in order to avoid getting into trouble. The time to expand your ideas and plans for the future is now. ★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): It's what you do for others that will count. Ask how you can assist friends, family or those in need and you will make a difference. It's your ability to sort out difficulties for others that will lead to what you do in the future. ★★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Nothing will change if you don't do something about it and take action. Now is the time to look at your options and prepare for the future. Once you know or see something you want, go after it. ★★★★★

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Keep things in perspective, even if someone is trying to raise false emotional issues. A closer look at something you may be able to get into in the new year will rejuvenate you and

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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give you a sense of accomplishment. There are options available. ★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Don't go over budget, regardless of what anyone says or does. Stay within your means. A good deed will be noted and will impress someone you are interested in doing more with in the future. Love is in the stars. ★★★★★

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Avoid arguments or a friendship may be at risk. If you share information, it is likely to backfire. Honesty is important but don't reveal something that will hurt others. Help others and you will help your own future too. ★★★

Birthday Baby: You are gracious and giving and take joy in pleasing others. You are creative, caring and careful to keep the peace. You are an opportunist who will compromise to get what you want.

Eugenia's Web sites: astroadvice.com for fun, eugenialast.com for confidential consultations

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

7	6	3	1	9	8	2	5	4
1	9	8	2	5	4	7	6	3
4	2	5	7	3	6	8	1	9
8	4	7	3	6	9	5	2	1
5	1	9	4	8	2	6	3	7
2	3	6	5	1	7	4	9	8
3	8	2	6	7	1	9	4	5
9	5	4	8	2	3	1	7	6
6	7	1	9	4	5	3	8	2

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

12/20

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID
OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle. Search horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

SANDSTORMS

Solution: 4 letters

Y	E	R	H	P	S	O	P	O	R	T	S	I	M
E	R	U	T	X	I	M	G	U	R	P	D	S	L
W	E	A	T	H	E	R	B	I	R	S	E	D	A
I	V	S	T	I	O	S	F	T	N	G	N	Y	S
N	T	P	F	W	I	S	F	U	Y	P	F	F	N
D	S	N	L	L	N	S	T	D	G	E	S	P	R
O	D	E	U	G	U	A	R	O	D	F	O	S	E
U	I	R	M	R	M	O	L	U	E	O	C	U	H
T	S	R	E	I	U	O	T	P	S	R	E	S	P
B	T	U	I	G	R	I	D	A	I	C	A	D	S
U	A	C	H	O	N	A	F	F	R	F	N	R	O
R	N	T	E	G	E	A	N	S	T	A	Y	A	M
S	C	T	A	R	S	T	R	O	N	G	H	Z	T
T	E	M	P	E	R	A	T	U	R	E	S	A	T
M	S	S	A	L	T	A	T	I	O	N	D	H	S

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12/20

Atmosphere, Bowl, Climate, Currents, Dense, Desert, Distances, Drought, Dunes, Earth, Erosion, Force, Hazards, Hozy, Layer, May, nitude, Mass, Meteorology, Mist, Mixture, Ocean, Outburst, Planetary, Plume, Pressure, Range, Rising, Sanara, Satat on, Screen, Severs, Soil, Speed, Spread, Strong, Susperd, Temperatures, Tro, psoshera, Weather, Wind

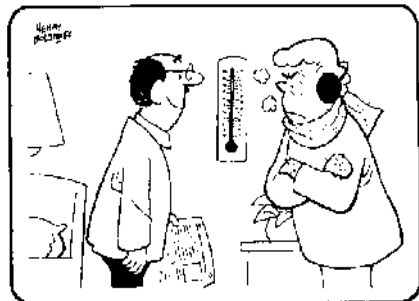
Yesterday's Answer: Rescue

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



1. Difference: The man's suit is different. 2. Difference: The woman's dress is different. 3. Difference: The clock on the wall is different. 4. Difference: The man's tie is different. 5. Difference: The woman's hair is different. 6. Difference: The man's shoes are different.

Wishing Well®

3	2	5	8	7	4	8	7	5	8	2	4	5
G	R	F	W	A	R	A	S	U	R	E	E	N
6	4	5	3	4	8	4	8	4	7	3	8	4
S	A	E	E	C	M	H	F	F	U	T	E	O
7	8	6	5	7	6	7	6	2	4	8	4	8
N	E	A	X	N	V	Y	O	W	R	L	T	I
3	7	4	7	8	5	3	6	7	8	6	8	5
O	O	H	U	N	P	R	R	T	G	T	S	E
2	4	7	5	3	5	7	5	7	5	4	3	2
A	E	L	R	G	I	O	E	O	N	T	A	R
3	4	6	3	2	4	7	2	6	5	2	5	2
N	O	H	I	D	P	K	S	E	C	A	E	R
3	6	3	2	2	6	2	6	2	6	2	2	2
Z	P	E	E	D	G	A	I	S	V	T	E	N

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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Super Crossword TIMBER LINE

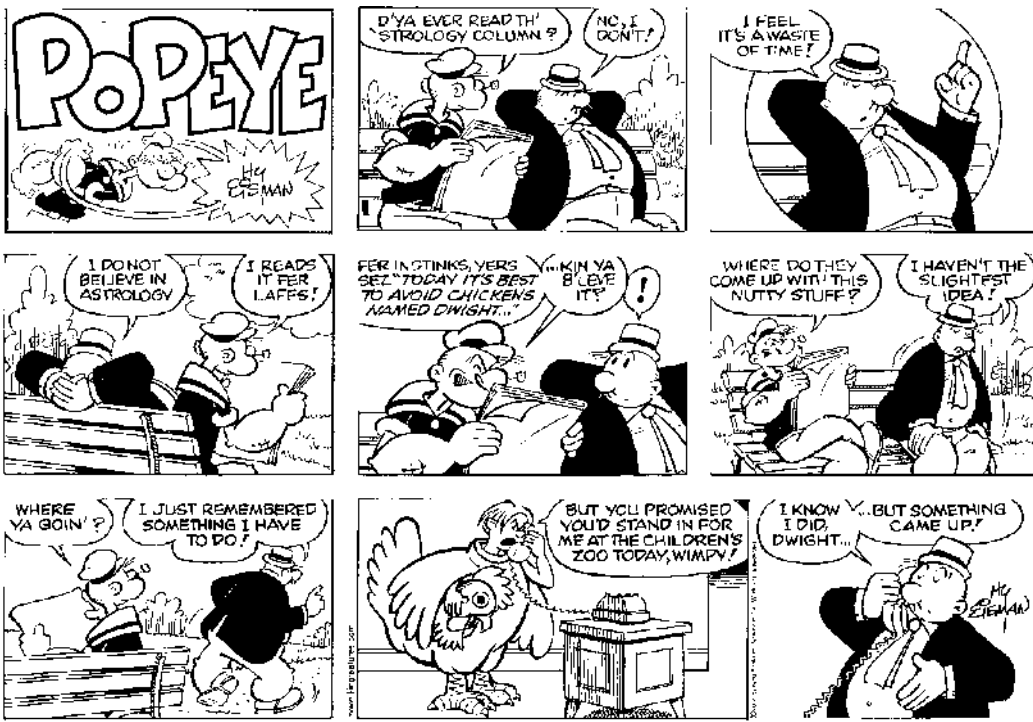
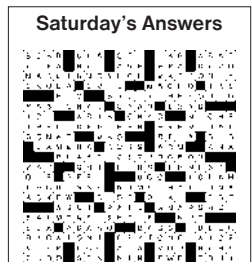
ACROSS	DOWN
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100 "B" Day	100 "B" Day

Trivia test by P. Rodriguez

1. MEDICAL: What common condition would you be suffering from if your doctor said you had nephrolithiasis?
2. U.S. GOVERNMENT: During the 20th century, what did the acronym HUAC stand for?
3. INVENTIONS: What 19th-century aid did Joseph Glidden invent that helped tame the West?
4. NICKNAMES: What are Georgetown University's sports teams known as?
5. MATH: What is the Arabic equivalent of the Roman numeral XC?
6. LITERATURE: In which book do the characters Flopsy and Mopsy appear?
7. LANGUAGE: What is a poseur?
8. SLOGANS: What product is known as "Vermont's Finest"?
9. RELIGION: What is a stupa?
10. GEOGRAPHY: Where are the Pillars of Hercules?

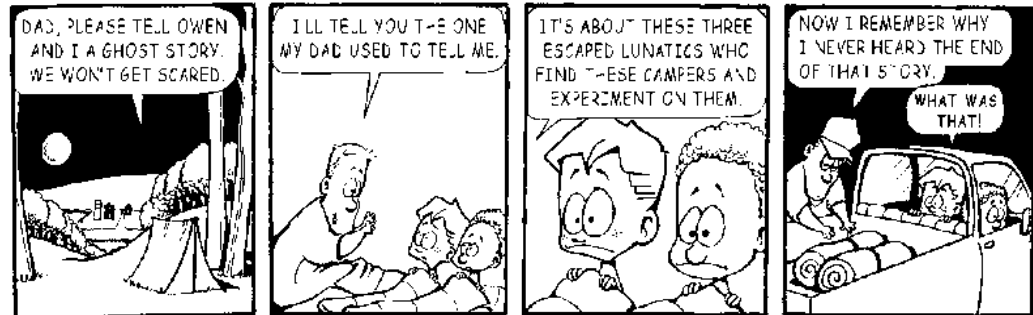
1. Kidney stones
2. House Un-American Activities Committee
3. Barbed wire
4. Hoys
5. 90
6. "The Tale of Peter Rabbit"
7. Someone who pretends to be what he or she is not
8. Ben & Jerry's ice cream
9. Buddhist shrine
10. Strait of Gibraltar

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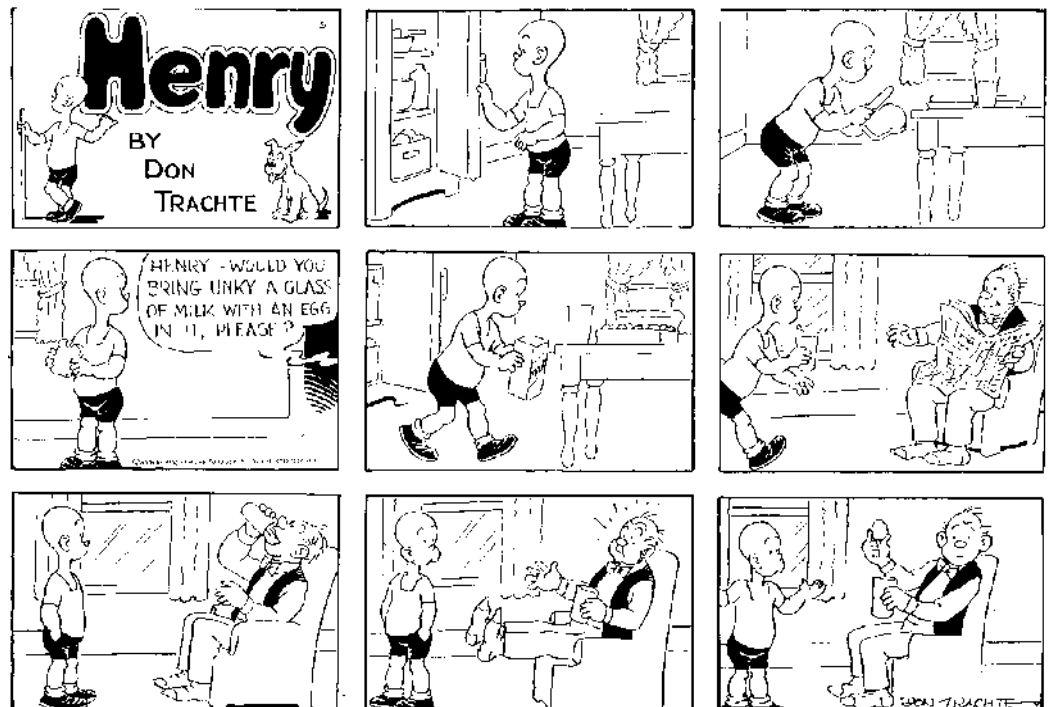
Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



CLASSIFIED ADS



CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as \$25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	\$25
• 5-Liner	\$35
• 3-Liner with picture	\$45
• 5-Liner with picture	\$55

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- Saipan Tribune: All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

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Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

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235-NEWS

Two aces, \$243.5 million, and a lot of hopes



NEW YORK
(AP)—
Most

teams triumphantly unveil a new ace. The New York Yankees presented a pair.

The sign board outside old Yankee Stadium beamed with an unusual message Thursday for a ballpark that already has seen its final game: "LET'S PLAY TWO," read the top line. "CC & AJ 1 PM TODAY," said the lower.

For \$243.5 million, a lot in most places but a trifle in a city where a financier is accused of swindling billions, the Yankees signed two pitchers they hope will restore the franchise's glory when it moves across the street to the new \$1.3 billion Yankee Stadium next year.

There was a Christmas tree on the mound of the old ballpark, Yogi Berra was walking around and down in the cramped Stadium Club, 11 people were seated on chairs beside the podium. Manager Joe Girardi's 9-year-old daughter, Serena, presented roses to the wives of CC Sabathia and A.J. Burnett.

Yankees president Randy Levine called the news conference "one last hurrah" for the 85-year-old stadium, scheduled for demolition starting next summer. Brian Cashman said the teddy bearish Sabathia "lights up a room when he walks in."

"I hope he lights up a city," the general manager said.

Disappointed, dismayed and dissed after their streak of 13 consecutive postseason appearances came to an end, the Yankees reversed course after a one-year experiment with young starters and exercised



New York Yankees co-owner Hal Steinbrenner, center, poses with the Yankees two new pitchers, C.C. Sabathia, left, and A.J. Burnett, right, during a news conference at Yankee Stadium in New York, Thursday, Dec. 18, 2008.

their economic might by finalizing huge contracts Thursday for the two highly pursued pitchers. Sabathia's \$161 million, seven-year deal is the highest for a pitcher. Burnett's \$82.5 million, five-year agreement would be the highest on many teams.

"We learned last year that injuries can happen across the board," Yankees co-chairman Hal Steinbrenner said. "There's no doubt pitching is a bit more worrisome, but you've got to live year by year and we're focused on 2009."

New York has used 51 starting pitchers since its last World Series title in 2000, according to the Elias Sports Bureau, tied for sixth in the majors and third in the AL. Kevin Brown, Javier Vazquez, Jeff Weaver, Randy Johnson and

Carl Pavano have all come and gone. Many of them were introduced with similar hoopla.

"You can't stop swinging for the fences," Cashman said, proudly wearing a World Series ring. "We've been here. We've done this before. How many times, right? And I've got this on my finger from the times where things have worked out. And I've got tread on my back from where I've been hit by a bus when it didn't work out."

Sabathia, wearing two large diamond earrings and more bling on his arm, slipped a large jersey with No. 52 over his dress shirt and Burnett put a trimmer No. 34 top over his. At 6-foot-7, about 300 pounds and with size 15 shoes, Sabathia carries big expectations to go with his big body.

"I'm not the best physique-looking guy," Sabathia said.

To reel him in, the Yankees dazzled the 28-year-old left-hander with fellow Californian Reggie Jackson, tales of how they had coveted him for more than a year and a provision that allows the 2007 AL Cy Young Award winner to terminate his contract after three years.

Derek Jeter made a recruiting call, and Cashman traveled to Sabathia's home in Vallejo, Calif., last week during the winter meetings to assure him and wife Amber that New York was a great place to live and pitch. That clinched it.

"Ten minutes after he left my house," Sabathia said, "I called him and I looked at my wife, I said, you know, 'I'll be

a Yankee.' Every time I say that I still get chills thinking about that."

Sabathia said the addition of a seventh season to the original \$138 million, six-year offer was important. His wife said Cashman's decision to offer the opt-out provision was key.

"When he said that, I said, 'We're going to love it,'" she recalled.

Already, they spent Wednesday looking at houses in Alpine, N.J. The Sabathias intend to permanently move to the area.

They said the one-month gap between the Yankees' initial offer and Sabathia's acceptance was partly because they have a new child and partly because he wanted to hear from every interested team. He was concerned

New York would withdraw its offer and move on.

"I was worried about the public perception here," Sabathia said. "I don't want anybody to think that I didn't want to come here."

Burnett seemed to be the wilder personality. He has a Pisces tattoo on his left hand in honor of his two sons. When asked about his trips to the disabled list (10), he interrupted the questioner.

"You don't have to say the number," he said.

The 31-year-old right-hander even received a recruiting call from Alex Rodriguez. Last September, Burnett got an unexpected recommendation to sign with the Yankees: from Carl Pavano.

His former Florida teammate, maligned for multiple injuries during his four seasons in New York, spoke with him during batting practice at Yankee Stadium.

"It's a great place to play. It's a great place to live," Burnett said Pavano told him. "I was expecting to hear, you know, different things."

Playing near his home in Maryland was important to Burnett. So was the chance to win.

"Of course, money had something to do with it," he added. "How often do you get the chance to put on pinstripes? I mean, whether you want to admit that you love them or hate them, everybody wants to be a Yankee."

Burnett was looking forward to picking out his locker in the oval clubhouse of the new ballpark, where the pair went to pose for pictures after the news conference. Before heading over, he heard a loud noise from above as he spoke with reporters.

"Get over to the new place quick," he said. "We're supposed to get out first."

Official: Clemens' trainer cooperated under threat

Roger Clemens' former personal trainer cooperated with investigators looking into steroids in baseball under threat of prosecution, an assistant U.S. attorney said in a court filing Thursday that could turn into a key factor in the lawsuit filed by the star pitcher.

In a declaration filed in federal court in Houston as part of Clemens' defamation lawsuit against Brian McNamee, assistant U.S. attorney Matthew Parrella said he told McNamee he was not a target of the investigation but could become one if he failed to cooperate.

If McNamee made any false statements to federal investigators or to the law firm hired by baseball to investigate drugs in the sport, Parrella said he could face prosecution.

McNamee told former Sen. George Mitchell's investigators that Clemens had used steroids and human growth hormone before baseball players and owners agreed to ban them.

"All arrangements, including time, date, and place, for the meetings were made by agents

or assistant United States attorneys," Parrella said.

Also filed Thursday were declarations from attorney Charles Scheeler, who worked with Mitchell, and Earl Ward, an attorney for McNamee. Both supported McNamee's claim that he faced prosecution if he did not help investigators.

Clemens has filed a defamation lawsuit against McNamee, who was quoted in Mitchell's report as saying that he injected the seven-time Cy Young Award winner more than a dozen times with steroids and/or HGH in 1998, 2000 and 2001. Clemens repeatedly has denied using illegal performance-enhancing drugs.

McNamee's lawyers have argued that because he did not volunteer information about Clemens but was coerced into giving it under threat of prosecution, he is immune from any defamation.

"These documents definitely show that Brian was required, did not voluntarily, speak," Richard Emery, one of McNamee's lawyers, said. "This was all part of his proffer agree-

ment and his cooperation agreement on pain of prosecution."

Lara Hollingsworth, one of Clemens' attorneys, said McNamee's conversations with Mitchell's people, a reporter and New York Yankees teammate Andy Pettitte were defamatory and not covered by any immunity provisions.

"These affidavits ... don't contradict our prior positions," Hollingsworth said. "(McNamee) was not under court order, he was not under legal compulsion. He talked to Senator Mitchell because it was to his benefit to do so."

Emery hopes most if not all of the case will be dismissed by U.S. District Judge Keith Ellison. Emery said the part of the suit dealing with an alleged conversation between McNamee and Pettitte in 2000 might remain as issue.

"There are no damages for Brian to talking to an admitted drug user about a mutual friend's drug use," Emery said. "It would lead to perhaps the deposition of Pettitte and Clemens, but that case is tiny." (AP)

Red Sox: 'Not going to be a factor' with Teixeira

BOSTON (AP)—The Boston Red Sox have been outbid for free agent first baseman Mark Teixeira and "are not going to be a factor" in acquiring him, owner John Henry said in an e-mail on Thursday night.

"We met with Mr. Teixeira and were very much impressed with him," Henry said. "After hearing about his other offers, however, it seems clear that we are not going to be a factor."

Henry, general manager Theo Epstein and president Larry Lucchino went to the Dallas area to meet with Teixeira and his agent Scott Boras.

"The Boston ownership was kind enough to request and travel to meet with Mark Teixeira," Boras said in an e-mail to The Associated Press. "While it was a very positive meeting, Mark was candid and advised he is in the process of making a decision and is now attempting to eliminate teams."

Henry's reference to the "other offers" leaves open the possibility that he is calling a bluff. Boras represented former Red Sox center fielder Johnny Da-

mon, who signed with the New York Yankees in 2005 after the Boston brass apparently refused to believe that the offer from their archrivals was real.

Teixeira hit .308 with 33 homers and 121 RBIs last season, including .358 with 13 homers and 43 RBIs in 54 games with the Angels.

The Texas talks came two years and seven days after Epstein, Lucchino and minority owner Tom Werner arrived in Newport Beach, Calif., to meet with Boras and another client, pitcher Daisuke Matsuzaka, whose rights the Red Sox had won with a \$51.1 million bid to his Japanese team.

The team officials planned to leave California two days later, with or without Matsuzaka, on Henry's private jet. They arrived at the airport, uncertain if Matsuzaka would join them. He did and they flew to Boston to work on details of his six-year, \$52 million deal.

In prior days, Boras had said he would not let Matsuzaka travel to Boston for a physical unless the sides had reached a

preliminary agreement.

The Los Angeles Angels, who obtained Teixeira from the Atlanta Braves in July, said last week they made an eight-year offer.

Teixeira also has been pursued by the Baltimore Orioles and Washington Nationals, and met before the winter meetings with Yankees general manager Brian Cashman. Officials of the Orioles and Angels said Boras had not been in contact with them on Thursday.

Henry had expressed concern about a contract of eight years or more.

"We all have limits," he wrote to the AP on Wednesday. "Eight years is a very long time in baseball and everywhere else."

He also said the amount the team is willing to spend on a free agent "depends on both" the economy and the player being sought.

"Baseball as a whole has not yet been hit by the financial crisis, but it will," Henry said. "The degree is in question and won't be answered for a while."

Manning nearly perfect as Colts beat Jaguars

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP)—Peyton Manning asked his coaches at halftime if they had any suggestions for him. All he got was, "You haven't thrown any incompletions. Just try to keep doing what you're doing."

Great tip.

Manning was nearly perfect all night, exactly what the Indianapolis Colts needed to overcome whatever emotion the Jacksonville Jaguars got from Richard Collier's return.

Manning completed his first 17 passes, picked apart Jacksonville's secondary and led the Colts to their eighth consecutive win and seventh straight playoff berth. He finished 29-for-34 and threw for 364 yards and three touchdowns, and the Colts secured the No. 5 seed in the AFC playoffs with a 31-24 victory over the Jaguars on Thursday night.

"Peyton Manning is unbelievable," coach Tony Dungy said. "He put a lot of it on his shoulders and kept us in it. He played unbelievably under the circumstances."

"All in all, with everything that was riding on it ... it was a great performance. It was an MVP performance for sure."

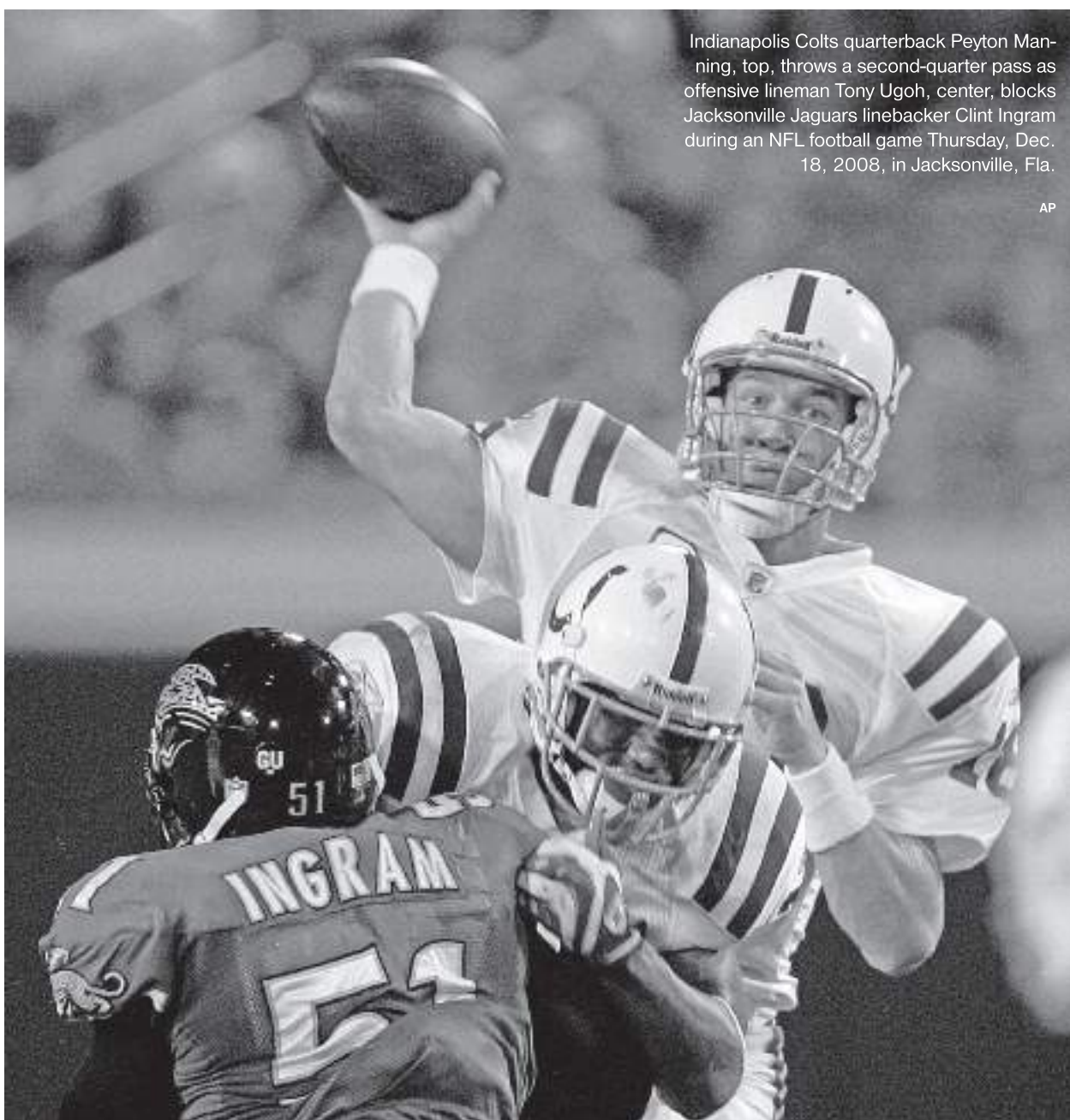
Manning led the Colts back from deficits of 14-0 and 24-14, and Adam Vinatieri's 45-yard field goal tied the game at 24-all late in the fourth.

Indianapolis (11-4) took the lead for good when Keiwan Ratliff intercepted a pass from David Garrard and returned it 35 yards for a touchdown with 4:48 remaining.

"One of those plays I was in the right place at the right time," Ratliff said. "He threw the ball and I just caught it and tried to get to the end zone."

The Jaguars had two chances to tie it, but both drives ended with sacks. Garrard drove Jacksonville to the 7-yard line with 29 seconds remaining, but Maurice Jones-Drew sprained his knee on a reception, and since the Jaguars had no timeouts, there was a 10-second runoff.

Garrard misfired on first down, then got sacked by Dwight Freeney to end the game.



Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning, top, throws a second-quarter pass as offensive lineman Tony Ugoh, center, blocks Jacksonville Jaguars linebacker Clint Ingram during an NFL football game Thursday, Dec. 18, 2008, in Jacksonville, Fla.

AP

start. The Jaguars scored touchdowns on their first two possessions and led 14-0 early in the second quarter.

Manning spoiled it for Jacksonville. He hurt the Jaguars on nearly every drive, spreading the ball around and throwing pinpoint passes all over the field.

"It's a funny game," Manning said. "We were completing some passes, but we were down 14-0. That dominated our thoughts. We knew it would be tough, but we didn't think we'd be down 14-0 out of the gate."

Dallas Clark finished with eight catches for 105 yards and a touchdown. Reggie Wayne had seven receptions for 108 yards and a score. Dominic Rhodes, held to 27 yards rushing, was much more dangerous out of the backfield. He caught six passes for 62 yards and a touchdown.

Manning completed his final six passes last week against Detroit and his first 17 against Jacksonville, giving him 23 in a row—the second-longest streak in NFL history. Donovan McNabb set the record of 24 straight in 2004.

"The best thing we did tonight, which was a point of interest, was to finish touchdowns in the red zone," Manning said. "We got touchdowns and didn't have to settle for too many field goals."

Garrard wasn't nearly as accurate, especially in the second half.

He finished 28-for-41 for 329 yards and a score. He added a rushing touchdown. Jones-Drew ran 20 times for 91 yards and caught seven passes for 71 yards.

Dennis Northcutt, starting for the second straight week in place of Jerry Porter (groin) and Matt Jones (suspension), has another strong game. He caught eight passes for 101 yards and a touchdown—his second consecutive 100-yard game after going nearly four years without one.

It wasn't enough, especially against Manning and the Colts.

"Peyton Manning is a good quarterback," Jaguars safety Reggie Nelson said. "He has always been good. That's what he does."

"Just can't take a sack right there," Garrard said. "I really didn't see it and have an opportunity to elude that guy. I thought I had guys coming open."

The Colts won without receiver Marvin Harrison (hamstring), running back Joseph Addai (shoulder) and linebacker Gary Brackett (leg). Dungy said the victory would allow him to rest many starters next week against Tennessee, giving

some players as many as 17 days of rest before opening the postseason.

The Jaguars (5-10) lost for the seventh time in the past nine games and fell to 2-6 at home this season. This one may have been more emotionally draining than any of the others.

Collier, a 6-foot-7 offensive lineman paralyzed from the waist down following a shooting in early September, returned

to the field for the first time and was recognized during pregame ceremonies. He drove onto the field, sat next to his teammates during the national anthem and then headed to midfield as an honorary team captain for the coin toss.

He answered a few questions afterward, then went to a luxury suite with family members to watch the game. He must have liked Jacksonville's fast

Roy scores 52 points in Blazers' win



PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—Brandon Roy scored a career-high 52 points, including a tiebreaking 3-pointer with 1:01 left, in the Portland Trail Blazers 124-119 comeback victory over the Phoenix Suns on Thursday night.

Roy was 14-of-27 from the field and 19-of-21 at the line. He topped his career high of 38 set last Friday night in a double-overtime loss to the Los Angeles Clippers.

Blazers guard Steve Blake matched his season high with 22 points and added 10 assists, and LaMarcus Aldridge scored 10 of his 16 points in the first quarter to help Portland improve to 17-10. With the victory, Portland ended an 11-game losing streak to Phoenix dating to March 12, 2006.

Amare Stoudemire led the Suns with 23 points, Matt Barnes added 22, Shaquille O'Neal had 19, and Steve Nash finished with 15 points and 11 assists. Phoenix was 41-of-72 from the field, and 12-of-18 from 3-point range.

Barnes and Leandro Barbosa combined to score the Suns' first 18 points

of the second quarter to put Phoenix in front 48-38.

A few minutes later, Portland nearly pulled even as Blake hit four consecutive jumpers, including two 3-pointers. But O'Neal, who scored 17 points in the first half, finished the quarter with a three-point play to give Phoenix a 66-59 halftime lead.

Portland used a 39-point third quarter to take a 98-93 lead. Roy scored 14 consecutive points for Portland, triggering a spurt where the Blazers outscored Phoenix 26-9 during the final 6 minutes of the quarter.

The two teams traded leads five times during the fourth quarter until Portland grabbed it for good on Roy's 3-pointer that made it 122-119.

Magic 90, Spurs 78

At Orlando, Dwight Howard came back to help the Orlando Magic take yet another step in their bid to join the NBA's elite teams.

Howard had 14 points and 13 rebounds after missing two games because of a sore knee, and Jameer Nelson scored 24 points in the Magic's

90-78 victory over perennial Western Conference contender San Antonio.

The win, coming at the front of a stretch that includes the Lakers on Saturday and Southwest Division leader New Orleans at home on Christmas, helped the Magic (20-6) stamp themselves as legitimate contenders. Orlando has won seven of its last eight games and leads Atlanta by 4 1/2 games in the Southeast Division.

"Sometimes things go your way," Nelson said.

Rashard Lewis added 15 points, and Hedo Turkoglu had 11.

Tim Duncan led the Spurs with 19 points.

The Spurs, down by 23 in the third quarter, used a 13-4 run to draw within six in the fourth quarter, but Nelson hit back-to-back baskets to give the Magic a cushion. Nelson scored 21 of his points in the second half.

"We've got to play with the great surge, because nobody believes in us, everybody doubts us," Nelson said. "We have to play for the fans, and each other, and everything will be fine."

Howard picked up his fifth foul

halfway into the fourth quarter and went to the bench.

The schedule was not kind to the Spurs, the oldest team in the league with an average age of 29. San Antonio lost at New Orleans on Wednesday night, and the Magic came out looking to run on the weary Spurs.

"I knew coming in they were coming off a very tough back to back," Magic coach Stan Van Gundy said. "We wanted the pace fast."

The Magic took advantage, outscoring the Spurs 18-2 on the fast break in building a five-point halftime lead.

"Everybody gets tough back to back," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said. "The timing wasn't great. Coming in at 3:30 (a.m.) wasn't good."

"Orlando will have something in its schedule where they'll have a god-awful back-to-back. It evens out in the end."

Orlando's next back-to-back matchup comes in mid-January, when its plays the Lakers and Nuggets on the road in consecutive nights.

The Spurs shot poorly in the first half. San Antonio made only 28 percent of its shots. Guard Tony Parker made only one of 10 shots, and Duncan was 2-of-7.

Orlando went on a 10-0 run early in the third quarter to take a 54-31 advantage. The Spurs didn't get closer than six points in the second half. San Antonio, using a smaller lineup, cut it to 71-65 on Parker's free throws midway through the fourth.

"They made shots when they needed to," Duncan said. "Jameer was great, obviously. He always seems to play great against us. They moved the ball well and hit big 3s to set us back."

"They really don't want us to shoot 3s," Nelson said. "Teams have to pick their poison. We have great shooters to take 3s. I'll continue to take the shots that are open."

The Magic have worked with an eight-man rotation much of the season, but injuries have forced them to dig deep on their bench. Nine players saw action against the Spurs, including seldom-used backup center Marcin Gortat.

Gortat had 16 points and 13 rebounds against Golden State last week in place of Howard. He had two points and three rebounds against the Spurs.

The Spurs (15-10) started 1-4, worst in team history, then won 14 of 20 games before Thursday. They've beaten only five teams with a winning record, and have lost two straight.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	24	2	.923	—
New Jersey	12	12	.500	11
New York	11	14	.440	12 1/2
Philadelphia	11	14	.440	12 1/2
Toronto	10	15	.400	13 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	20	6	.769	—
Atlanta	15	10	.600	4 1/2
Miami	12	12	.500	7
Charlotte	8	18	.308	12
Washington	4	19	.174	14 1/2

Central Division

Cleveland	21	4	.840	—
Detroit	14	9	.609	6
Chicago	12	13	.480	9
Milwaukee	11	16	.407	11
Indiana	9	16	.360	12

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

New Orleans	15	7	.682	—
Houston	16	9	.640	1/2
San Antonio	15	10	.600	1 1/2
Dallas	14	10	.583	2
Memphis	9	16	.360	7 1/2

Northwest Division

Denver	17	8	.680	—
Portland	17	10	.630	1
Utah	16	11	.593	2
Minnesota	4	21	.160	13
Oklahoma City	2	24	.077	15 1/2

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	21	3	.875	—
Phoenix	15	11	.577	7
L.A. Clippers	7	18	.280	14 1/2
Golden State	7	19	.269	15
Sacramento	7	19	.269	15

Yesterday's Games

Orlando 90, San Antonio 78
Portland 124, Phoenix 119

NBA LEADERS

Scoring

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Wade, Mia.	24	236	182	672	28.0
James, Clev.	25	237	179	683	27.3
Nowitzki, Dall.	24	231	143	633	26.4
Bryant, LAL	24	217	144	601	25.0
Granger, Ind.	24	200	127	585	24.4
Harris, N.J.	21	149	184	499	23.8
Bosh, Tor.	25	207	172	591	23.6
Durant, OKC.	25	213	123	580	23.2
Johnson, Atl.	25	211	95	575	23.0
Carter, N.J.	24	191	115	540	22.5
Randolph, LAC	22	192	93	493	22.4
Roy, Port.	26	204	148	579	22.3
Stoudemire, Phoe.	25	196	160	555	22.2
Jefferson, Minn.	25	230	83	543	21.7
Butler, Wash.	23	176	119	492	21.4
Anthony, Den.	23	170	124	490	21.3
Howard, Orl.	23	164	157	485	21.1
Gordon, Chi.	25	182	105	527	21.1
J. Terry, Dall.	24	190	76	504	21.0
Duncan, S.A.	24	194	112	500	20.8
Mayo, Mem.	25	195	85	520	20.8

FG Percentage

	FG	FGA	PCT
Nene, Den.	140	231	.606
O'Neal, Phoe.	120	201	.597
Okafor, Char.	131	224	.585
Howard, Orl.	164	287	.571
Bogut, Mil.	118	209	.565
Gasol, LAL	158	280	.564
Lee, N.Y.	146	260	.562
Boozer, Utah	99	177	.559
Stoudemire, Phoe.	196	351	.558
Biedrins, G.S.	160	287	.557

Rebounds

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Howard, Orl.	23	105	220	325	14.1
Camby, LAC	22	70	202	272	12.4
Biedrins, G.S.	26	117	194	311	12.0
Randolph, LAC	22	80	166	246	11.2
Murphy, Ind.	23	45	211	256	11.1
Okafor, Char.	26	103	182	285	11.0
Duncan, S.A.	24	72	187	259	10.8
Bogut, Mil.	24	85	172	257	10.7
Lee, N.Y.	25	74	191	265	10.6
Jefferson, Minn.	25	78	176	254	10.2

Assists

	G	AST	AVG
Paul, N.O.	22	262	11.9
Williams, Utah	14	142	10.1
Calderon, Tor.	23	208	9.0
Duhon, N.Y.	25	214	8.6
Nash, Phoe.	22	183	8.3
B. Davis, LAC	24	196	8.2
Kidd, Dall.	24	196	8.2
Rondo, Bos.	26	191	7.3
Wade, Mia.	24	173	7.2
Billups, Den.	23	162	7.0

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
N.Y. Jets	9	5	0	.643	385	319
New England	9	5	0	.643	350	302
Miami	9	5	0	.643	283	269
Buffalo	6	8	0	.429	306	306

South

x-Tennessee	12	2	0	.857	344	197
y-Indianapolis	11	4	0	.733	354	298
Houston	7	7	0	.500	319	343
Jacksonville	5	10	0	.333	295	340

North

x-Pittsburgh	11	3	0	.786	302	192
Baltimore	9	5	0	.643	325	213
Cleveland	4	10	0	.286	232	305
Cincinnati	2	11	1	.179	174	358

West

Denver	8	6	0	.571	326	366
San Diego	6	8	0	.429	346	302
Oakland	3	11	0	.214	205	348
Kansas City	2	12	0	.143	254	386

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

x-N.Y. Giants	11	3	0	.786	374	246
Dallas	9	5	0	.643	332	288
Philadelphia	8	5	1	.607	369	273
Washington	7	7	0	.500	231	266

South

Carolina	11	3	0	.786	353	264
Tampa Bay	9	5	0	.643	313	251
Atlanta	9	5	0	.643	336	281
New Orleans	7	7	0	.500	390	353

North

Minnesota	9	5	0	.643	342	290
Chicago	8	6	0	.571	331	302
Green Bay	5	9	0	.357	371	339
Detroit	0	14	0	.000	240	444

West

x-Arizona	8	6	0	.571	386	358
San Francisco	5	9	0	.357	295	341
Seattle	3	11	0	.214	260	355
St. Louis	2	12	0	.143	189	417

x-clinched division

y-clinched playoff spot

Yesterday's Game

Indianapolis 31, Jacksonville 24

By The Associated Press

Fil-Taga December Ace set this Sunday



The Fil-Taga Golfers Association will hold its December Ace of the Month Tournament this Sunday, Dec. 21,

at the Marianas Golf and Country Club in Marpi.

According to tournament director Mando Guban, show time is set at

11am with tee-off time scheduled 30 minutes later at 11:30am.

Established in 1993, Fil-Taga's tournaments operate under a computer-controlled handicap system that creates parity among players in the A and B Flights.

A Fil-Taga Ace of the Month champion is crowned monthly. Regular tournaments are scheduled once a month, normally every third Sunday. Green

fees are in the \$35 to \$40 price range for most tournaments.

Its 2008-2009 set of officers are led by president Mike Cruz, vice president Jhun Calma, secretary Manny Po, treasurer Arnaldo Guban, and board of directors Fr. Manny Corcuera, Jhun Dela Cruz, Ted Malaran, Gil Faller, Rey Ferraz, Greg De Torres, Rene Batalliones, Nestor Siruelo, and George Sablan. *(Saipan Tribune)*

Wednesday 8-ball set at Round Two

Round Two Bar and Grill hopes to revive pool play at the Garapan landmark with its Wednesday 8-ball tournament.

Coordinator Boyet Sequico said the



competition will start on Dec. 24 at 7pm. Entry fee for the Round Two 8-Ball Open Tournament is \$10 and

the winner will get a handsome cash prize and a trophy from organizers.

For more information about the Round Two 8-Ball Open Tournament, call Ricky Vertudez at 234-6930. *(PR)*

OL' ACES

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fourth period, Docomo collapsed in the last four minutes of the match to lose the game.

The match was last tied at 73-all, after Elias Rangamar canned his third triple of the night, with 4:01 left on the clock.

The Ol'Aces then had an 8-3 windup scrambling for defense in the closing minutes forcing the Hoopaholics to commit errors and take hurried shots.

Rangamar picked Lee's pocket with the latter attempting to drive inside. Freddie Pelisamen went on to make a fastbreak layup off Rangamar's steal and pitch to put the Ol'Aces in the lead, 75-73.

Both teams traded misses until the Ol'Aces showed a good hustle play with Mike Olaitiman saving the ball from going out off the baseline and kicking it back to Pelisamen to the left sideline.

BAUGH

From Page 28

and probably the smartest, most unbiased football historian anywhere, recalled Thursday in a telephone conversation the very first NFL game he attended.

"I was nine years old and my father (Ed Sabol, founder of NFL Films) took me to Shibe Park in Philadelphia to see the Eagles play the Redskins. It was 1951. My dad said: 'See the man wearing No. 33? That's Sammy Baugh.' That's all he said," Steve Sabol said.

"It was like pointing out the Empire State Building, the Washington Monument or Niagara Falls. 'That's Sammy Baugh.' That's all that needed to be said to anyone who followed pro football in the 1940s and early 1950s."

Sabol isn't exaggerating one bit. The inaugural class of the Pro Football Hall of Fame, in 1963, included George Halas, Bronko Nagurski, Red Grange, Jim Thorpe, Ernie Nevers, Mel Hein, Curly Lambeau and Don Hutson among 17 charter members. And only Halas and Baugh were selected unanimously. The history of pro football simply cannot be written without the story of Slingin' Sammy.

The nickname may have come from his prowess on the mound, but it fit the way he would play the quarterback position. Benny Friedman threw the football down the field in 1928 for the NFL Detroit Wolverines and 1929 for the New York Giants, but Baugh was the first to play the position as we know it today. "Baugh demonstrated,"

Sabol said, "that the forward pass could be an effective weapon instead of an act of desperation."

Sabol, in pouring over game film through the years, discovered something else about Baugh that was radical in the 1940s. "He was the first guy we ever saw on film who passed the ball on first down," Sabol said.

We know, though didn't then, that Baugh also was working at a professional disadvantage (and not just that the football of the 1940s was a lot rounder in the middle than the one guys sling around today).

Unlike the quarterbacks most often mentioned in the "Greatest Ever" discussions, Baugh never played for a great coach. "Sid Luckman," Sabol said, "played for George Halas. Otto Graham played for Paul Brown. Montana played for Bill Walsh. Unitas played for Weeb Ewbank and Don Shula. Elway played for Dan Reeves and Mike Shanahan. But Baugh played for 10 coaches. He played for guys who quit in the middle of the season, who were fired in the middle of the season. Ray Flaherty was probably the best coach he played for. He had no continuity. He never had great teams around him."

No wonder Baugh, facing more than his share of third and 15s, had to rely more heavily than he wanted on the quick kick, often from the tailback in the single wing, which certainly inflated his punting average of 50-plus yards per kick. Still, Baugh led the NFL in passing, interceptions grabbed and punting. Imagine how many millions a player who could do all those things would command today ... not that he'd

on his way for another undergoal stab, with 42 seconds left in the fourth.

Docomo had another chance to cut the lead when the Ol'Aces was called for an eight-second violation from the backcourt. But Ryan Sanciangco instead of firing a triple after getting a good look at the basket from the right key opted to pass the ball to Wallace.

Pelisamen reached in and successfully stole the ball paving the way for another fastbreak layup for the Ol'Aces.

Fitial ended Docomo's silence with a triple, but the Ol'Aces still led by five, 81-76, with only 12 seconds left in the game.

Ol'Aces 81 — F. Pelisamen 26, White 14, Rangamar 11, Lizama 10, Lauron 9, Olaitiman 4.

Docomo 76 — Wallace 25, Sanciangco 11, Jo. Villacrusis 10, Fitial 7, J. Diaz 6, Lee 4, Saralu 4.

Scoring by quarters: 20-20, 37-35, 59-60, 81-76.

be allowed. But Baugh was such a solid tackler he'd often be the first downfield to slam somebody after throwing an interception. "Unitas would do that," Sabol said. "Baugh played safety. He had that tough, prairie strength. He was a leathery kind of guy."

Certainly, he must have been that, among other things, to live such a long, full life. I felt like I got to know more about Baugh than any of my contemporaries because two of the sportswriters who have had a disproportionate effect on me, Shirley Povich and Dan Jenkins, knew Baugh well. Tom Boswell and I would so happily give up our space in The Post today for one, 1,500-word essay/tribute to Baugh by Shirley.

Sabol had come to know Baugh that way, though after his 16-year career was over. Sabol told the story of actor Robert Duval going down to Texas for a visit, ostensibly to study Baugh's manner. Duval then patterned the role of Gus McCrae in "Lonesome Dove" after Slingin' Sammy. Baugh's death Wednesday night hit Sabol hard both professionally and personally. Baugh made for a fascinating interview subject, but he was also the first football player of note Sabol had ever watched in person.

The only autograph Sabol has in his office at NFL Films is one from Baugh, on a Redskins helmet. Sabol has a deep fondness for pro football, but an unwavering objectivity when it comes to players and their contributions to the game.

"When you're talking about the greatest players ever," he said, "you've got to start with Jim Brown. Jerry Rice is in that conversation. ... So is Sammy Baugh."

OLEAI

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mez, Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association president Michael A. White, Northern Marianas Athletics president Kurt Barnes, Division of Sports and Recreation director Joe Lizama, Basketball Association of Northern Marianas Islands president Elias Rangamar, Department of Community and Cultural Affairs' Ramona Rebueng, NMHC corporate director Joshua Sasamoto, and other officials of various government agencies.

Sasamoto in his closing remarks said the grandstand is a facility fitted to the CNMI's talented athletes.

"We have so many athletes with great talents and it is just right to give them the venue to showcase their talents," Sasamoto said.

"But with this benefit comes responsibilities. I hope athletes and the rest of the community will do their best to maintain the grandstand," Sasamoto added.

Lizama bowed to work with the public and the Division of Sports and Recreation staff to take care of the grandstand and the pathways.

Meanwhile, White on behalf of various sports associations and CNMI athletes thanked NMHC for getting things done.

"Their effort ensured that we had a great addition to our sports facilities, which our athletes look forward to enjoy," White said.

NMA, which hosted the Oceania championships in June, through Barnes said having a grandstand and other improvement within the sports complex will give the CNMI an opportunity to bid for hosting regional games.

Two aces, \$243.5 million, and a lot of hopes



Most teams triumphantly unveil a new ace. The New York Yankees presented a pair.

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Saipan Tribune Sports

Manning nearly perfect as Colts beat Jaguars

Peyton Manning asked his coaches at halftime if they had any suggestions for him. All he got was, "You haven't thrown any incompletions. Just try to keep doing what you're doing."

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28 SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2008

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Oleai grandstand inaugurated



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

From left, NMHC corporate director Joshua Sasamoto, Lt. Gov. Timothy Villagomez, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, DCCA's Ramona Rebuénog, and Paul Khang of 3K Corporation, lead the ribbon cutting ceremony for the inauguration of the Oleai Sports Complex grandstand yesterday.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial joined members and officials of the sports community in the inauguration of a grandstand at the Oleai Sports Complex yesterday.

The grandstand was built on the south side of the Oleai Sports Complex track and field facility

at the back of the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

"Despite the economic challenges, it pleases me to see the completion of projects such as this, as we continue to improve our islands for our residents and visitors alike," said Fitial in his brief speech.

"This project, although modest, created spending and economic activity for our Commonwealth. This project enhances the value of our

Oleai Sports Complex to our youth population, sports enthusiasts, and the general community. This project may also enhance our appeal to tourists and sports tourists," the governor added.

The grandstand was built through the funds secured by the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Besides the grandstand, which ac-

cording to NMHC took 90 days to build, NMHC was also responsible for getting funds for the construction of pathways in the sports complex. Construction of the pathways costs \$47,800, while the NMHC spent \$127,450 for the building of the grandstand bringing the cost of the two projects to \$175,250.

Joining Fitial in the inauguration rites were Lt. Gov. Timothy Villago-

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By MICHAEL WILBON
The Washington Post



Baugh was among football's greatest

Too often the discussion of Greatest QB Ever begins with Joe Montana.

Occasionally, the pick is one of his contemporaries, John Elway. If somebody closer to 60 years old is in the room there might be some substantive examination of John Unitas. Only if there's a real student of pro football in the mix will Otto Graham's name be tossed.

Hardly ever does the discussion roll back far enough to include Slingin' Sammy Baugh, the greatest Redskin ever, without question, and almost certainly the first great passing quarterback in pro football history. That's because Baugh, who lived to the age of 94, outkicked his coverage, as the old coaches like to say.

Baugh lived longer than most of the people who adequately chronicled his extraordinary career. Right now, the 1958 NFL Championship game, a.k.a. "The Greatest Game Ever Played" is being celebrated as the beginning of modern professional football.

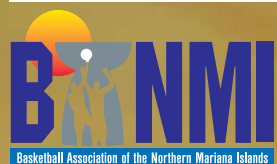
Baugh retired six years before that game was played. He retired before games were routinely broadcast on television. You have to be approaching 70 years old to have seen him play for the Washington Redskins, and it almost had to be in person.

Luckily, Baugh didn't outkick all his coverage. Steve Sabol, president of NFL Films

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Ol'Aces beats Docomo as Budweiser caging starts

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER



The Ol'Aces won the opening game in the 2008-2009 BANMI-Budweiser Cup Men's Islandwide Basketball League, slipping past the Docomo Hoopaholics, 81-76, Thursday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

After keeping pace with the Ol'Aces in the first three quarters and midway in the

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The Ol'Aces' Freddie Pelisamen, left, and Docomo Hoopaholics' Joe Villacris battle for the loose ball during the opening game in the 2008-2009 BANMI-Budweiser Cup Men's Islandwide Basketball League Thursday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO



AP

In this Dec. 13, 1942 file photo, Sammy Baugh, quarterback for the Washington Redskins, intercepts a pass from the Chicago Bears in his own end zone to break up a Bears scoring threat during the fourth quarter of NFL Playoff Championship game in Washington.